MAKING MIDDLE SCHOOL READING INTERVENTION MORE MEANINGFUL FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THROUGH TEAM TEACHING: ACTION RESEARCH

Jennifer Sinal Swingler

University of Bridgeport, 2017

Gail Prelli, Ed.D., Chair

Thomas W. Christ, Ph.D., Reader

Regine Randall Ph.D., Reader

Thomas W. Christ, Ph.D., Director, Education Leadership Doctoral Program

Allen Cook, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education

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Doctoral Student's Name: Jennifer Sinal Swingler

Student ID Number: 0466357

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The signatures below indicate that the above-named doctoral candidate has defended his or her dissertation in front of the dissertation committee. The committee hereby recommends to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies that the candidate should receive the following:

X Unconditional Pass

_____ Pass with Minor Dissertation Revision
Revisions must be completed by: (Date)

_____ Pass with Major Dissertation Revision
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_____ Failure

Signatures of Agreement to Above:

Chair: Carol E Ricelli

Member: Regina Randall

Member: Thomas W Cook

Approval:

Director: Thomas W Cook

Dean: Mary Cook

ABSTRACT

This Qualitative Action Research explored an alternative approach to deliver reading interventions using a team teaching (co-teaching) push in support model for middle school students that was delivered by both an English (Ela) teacher and a reading teacher during an extended instructional block. This action research consisted of two phases of research beginning with a case study that was conducted using a retrospective analysis of one school district's reading intervention practices and English language arts program across three middle schools. The researcher co- constructed and implemented a pilot which included a team taught push in reading model through an extended intervention block. The researcher reviewed the genesis and implementation of a pilot push in team teaching instructional model and completed a reflective process of the implementation. The researcher collected and analyzed data sources from teachers and administration from the pilot. This exploratory action research explored Ela teacher's, reading teacher's and administration's perceptions of the push in team teaching pilot program as a component of an Ela instructional framework and as a possible intervention model for adolescent readers who require reading support. Teachers reflected on the process of team teaching as it coincided with the redefinition of the Ela curriculum and instructional model (Erickson, 2000; Erickson, 2007; Erickson & Lanning, 2014; Lanning, 2013). The researcher used the results of the retrospective case study and information from the pilot year in Phase I to build a professional learning cycle (intervention) that is presented in Phase II. The professional learning intervention consisted of five professional learning cycles that were implemented during the second iteration of the push in team teaching model. The research concluded with an ethnographic reflection of the change process at a system level and reflected on the use of action research as a tool for educational leaders.

To: D.H.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Literacy, the ability to read, write and communicate, is one of the highest profile skills needed for graduating students as without strong literacy skills, students won't be college or career ready and access to information will be limited (Common Core State Standards [CCSS], 2010; Gambrell & Morrow, 2015; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; RAND, 2002; Wanzek, Vaughn, Scammacca, Metz, Murray, Roberts, & Danielson, 2013). Literacy proficiency, especially in the area of reading, has repeatedly taken center stage in the spotlight of educational policy and maintained its position as one of educator's highest priorities. Multiple studies resulting in grounded empirical research affirm that in order for an adult to succeed in a highly competitive 21st century global economy, that individual must be able to read, write, and communicate (National Endowment of the Arts, 2007). Furthermore, students who are not proficient in reading skills by the end of grade three could experience long-term impacts and may not have the prerequisite skills necessary to handle the challenges of upper level academics (Graves, Juel, Graves, & Dewitz, 2011; NAEYC, 1998; RAND, 2002; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). Numerous studies have been conducted measuring best practices in the elementary grades, but research on secondary reading intervention practices is lacking, and warrants further attention and research (Ciullo, Lembke, Carlisle, Thomas, Goodwin, & Judd, 2016; Scammacca, Roberts, Reutebuch, & Torgeson, 2007; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; Wanzek et al., 2013). This research examined one suburban school district's transition from a traditional pull out reading intervention model to a push in team-teaching model of reading intervention within the English language arts (Ela) classroom in three middle schools as the Ela department transitioned to a concept based curriculum focusing on universal themes and genre study concentrating on the processes,

concepts, skills and strategies employed by readers and writers (Erickson & Lanning, 2014; Lanning, 2013).

The definition of literacy has shifted in the twenty first century. The International Literacy Association (ILA) defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context" (Literacy Worldwide, 2015). As a society, the influx of varied information and information types continues to increase both through Internet and social media (Godin, 2012). Educators need to continue to focus skill development and strengthen students' ability to be critical readers and writers, which can be categorized as a moral imperative, not just an educational institution's responsibility (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Society exists and thrives as a "connection revolution" society as the floodgates of information and communication have opened and students are expected to navigate a world where information and global connection is only a click away; a revelation that shows no signs of slowing down nor does it always provide students with the opportunities to engage in sustained engaged reading (Alverman, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Godin, 2012; National Endowment of the Arts, 2007). Additionally, higher concentration on literacy in the content areas through cross content text analysis is receiving further national attention as many high stakes assessments, SAT, PSAT, SBA, and PEAC are associated with the expectations outlined Common Core State Standards (2010) which includes informational text. Despite decades of effort, the reading achievement gap continues to cause national concern as measured through the NAEP scores (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jange, & Meyer, 2012; RAND 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Literacy leaders and teachers continue to research, implement, and explore best practices that will encourage and motivate the reticent adolescent reader. As cited in Pajares and Urdan (2006), Elder (1994)

claims that the youth of today "are players in an electronic era of rapid social and technological change that is transforming how people communicate, educate, work, relate to each other, and conduct their business and daily affairs"; the needs of readers have changed over the past twenty years and will undoubtedly continue to evolve (Pajares & Urdan, 2006, p. 2).

The adolescent reader is highly complex and the instructional context of how reading is taught and practiced impacts the development of students' comprehension abilities (RAND, 2002). Teachers and administrators continue to seek innovative ways to engage the adolescent reader authentically. English language arts (Ela) classrooms may engage in practices that encourage students to choose high interest independent reading books or topics, engage in literature circles or book clubs, and matching readers to high interest narrative texts and informational articles (Ho & Guthrie, 2013). These strategies may better engage a struggling adolescent reader. Reticent or struggling readers need ongoing, targeted instructional support across the school day, not just in the Ela classroom as volume reading and engaged reading matters (Allington, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Secondary English language arts teachers may be well equipped to teach the content of Ela, but Ela teachers may not have the background or efficacy necessary to meet the needs of a reader who is performing below grade level; secondary Ela teachers may not be aware of the complex stages of the reading process or how students learn to read (Cantrell, Almansi, Carter, & Rintamaa, 2013). Additionally, reading interventionists are trained as k-12 reading specialists who may or may not have a contextual understanding of the demands on a middle school student under the rigor of a secondary school curricula both in Ela and other content areas. Schools or districts who employ secondary reading teachers may not require reading teachers to also have a secondary degree or experience teaching the adolescent in middle school.

There is potential opportunity for further the work of both the Ela teacher and the reading teacher as constructive collaboration between the Ela teacher and the reading teacher could create a different dynamic of planning and instruction. Research states that collaboration and ongoing embedded professional learning may provide opportunities for teachers to increase their efficacy yet this alone does not directly correlate to improving student achievement (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010). The collaboration as an action is simply not enough, student needs, instructional plans, and student motivation and engagement techniques must also be considered. Additionally, adolescent readers' interests become further diversified and complex and students in middle school strive to have what they are reading "make sense" causing a strain on the student both emotionally and socially as social pressures increase during adolescence as does the intensity of their emotions (Graves et al., 2011, p. 125). As texts change, the look of texts change, becoming more sophisticated in length, composition, and structure (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Adolescent readers who are engaged in text that is measured as appropriate for his or her independent or instructional level could feel pressured by peers, as the text itself could be seen as childish or basic, and student motivation will decrease if students perceive themselves in a socially awkward situation (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; RAND, 2002). In order for students to become stronger readers, students need to be engaged in reading using authentic reading practices (Allington, 2013). Adolescents must engage in reading that is authentic to context, reading that is meaningful and provides students an opportunity to work with varied text and text types that will support students' independent critical thinking. Students need to work within authentic and connected context, activate schema and background knowledge across content learning so that students practice doing the reading

work necessary to the intended learning target (RAND, 2002; Solis, Miciak, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2014).

In 2008, the Connecticut State Department of Education presented its version of Response to Intervention (RTI) with its local Connecticut plan, Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). RTI is a result of the No-Child Left Behind Act (2001) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEA](2004) along with federal regulations further passed in 2006 (CSDE, 2008). The construct of RTI shifts instructional practices away from a discrepancy model of identifying students with learning needs to a plan for early intervention and support within and beyond classroom core instruction. Tier 1 instruction can be defined as strong core differentiated instruction and should meet the needs of approximately 80% of students within a school system. Tier 2 instruction is more intensive instruction that is typically delivered through small group within the classroom or outside the classroom with a specialist. Tier 3 instruction is more intensive, more frequent, and may occur daily focusing on targeted skills and may be recommended for students who fall below district or state identified benchmarks (Gambrell & Morrow 2015; Wanzek et al., 2013). Tiered intervention practices are under local district's control and rely heavily on local leadership to manage and determine the site and delivery model of both Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention. Additionally, districts may view the tiered intervention system serving varied purposes. The intervention supports the instructional needs of students but the intervention or tiered system also may guide a school's ability to identify students who potentially have a learning disability (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015, p. 11). Systems for this type of work within a school or district organization can help promote coherence of practices. School districts strive to find coherence across grade level instructional

practices both horizontally and vertically, while still maintaining focus on meeting the needs of individual students (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

There is a the lack of research in reading intervention in the secondary setting and some ingenuity is needed; "more flexible collaborative models that blur the lines between core instruction and reading intervention are being used in schools" (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). Individual interventions or programs may serve as a short-term fix, but could potentially lack the sustainability of long- term impact and changes in student achievement (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). Traditionally Ela and other content area teachers are supporting students through Tier 1 "core" instruction while reading teachers work in isolated practice to deliver Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention outside of classroom practice. This research explored a potential option to address the disconnect which is both literal and allegorical as in many cases students in small group interventions may meet success within the small group taught in isolation, but students may or may have guided practice and opportunities to apply the skills and strategies they have learned in intervention within the context of the core academic classes. Students who receive targeted intervention outside of the core classroom may not be able to independently apply the skills learned on grade level content in an authentic context when asked to generalize the skill independently in the core academic classes.

Teacher training and preparation programs along with professional development have been challenged to embrace the rigorous standards of the CCSS (2010) as the demands of the CCSS are higher level and incredibly rigorous in both narrative and informational reading skills. English language arts teachers are trained to teach the content of English and language arts which includes the reading and writing of texts within the English content area, however teachers may not be highly adept or have the knowledge in order to appropriately meet the needs of

students who have difficulty reading (Dieker & Little, 2005). Secondary English teachers do not always have a strong background in reading process or the progressions of the strategies and skills behind reading comprehension as secondary teachers depend on elementary colleagues bring students to reading mastery before students enter middle school (Scarborough, 2001). Secondary teachers in all content areas have justification for concern about the diverse needs of middle school students who are unable to process text and high level text as defined by the Common Core State Standards (2010). Additionally, middle school teachers feel the pressure of maintaining a rigorous pace, and frequently the reading material in both English language arts and other content areas (science, social studies, world language) is potentially beyond students' ability to comprehend (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003). Middle school Ela teachers are responsible to meet the needs of all students in their class whose reading comprehension levels that could range across multiple grade levels, but they may not have to tools, resources, time, or strategies necessary to close adolescent readers' achievement gap. In parallel, reading teachers may not have middle school teaching experience, as his or her certification is that of a reading specialist across all grades k-12. Reading teachers may be able to deliver targeted instructional practices in isolation, but are not afforded the opportunity to work with students in the content area to bridge the discreet skill instruction to the generalized classroom setting. Elmore (2000) states "instructional improvement requires continuous learning: Learning is both an individual and a social activity" (p. 20). Ela teachers also need ongoing support and modeling that better prepares them to support struggling adolescent readers in their charge as middle school Ela teachers may not have strong efficacy when working with struggling middle school readers. Additionally the CCSS (2010) demands higher level of reading comprehension in order to prepare students to be college and career ready. Ela teachers need additional support on how to

close the achievement gap in reading for most students, and this pedagogical deficit will not be solved with a quick fix one time professional development session (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Guskey, 1986). Teacher as learner warrants further research as Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) indicate that "teacher learning is a relatively new topic of research so there is not a great deal of data about it" (p. 204).

This research explored the local impact on teachers who work to plan and collaborate on students in need of reading support. In addition, the research explored how administration and teachers can orchestrate embedded professional learning through the concept of team teaching complemented by changes made to a curriculum and instructional framework for a department. Teachers were surveyed after the pilot year of team teaching in a push in intervention model. Administration was interviewed about their perceptions of the push in team teaching model. The teacher survey results indicated that additional professional learning was needed in order to further support the team teachers (both Ela and reading) and the second phase of the action research cycle was designed to meet teachers identified needs. The action research looked at the pilot of the team taught push in intervention model in grades seven and eight as an intervention model that is designed to be more typical of an adolescent student's experiences and measured by typical assessments within a more authentic classroom setting (Scammaca et al., 2007).

Educational leaders also manage the local effects of high stakes school reform and consider how this reform could potentially impact local systems; "not only is the social atmosphere of the classroom and school likely to suffer, but the learning climate is also imperiled in a variety of ways" (Maehr & Maehr, 1996, p. 81). The Connecticut Department of Education released a district report card and school report card that articulates new accountability measures that all districts and schools will be measured against (CSDE, 2016). School systems can't

depend on strong administration and or teacher leaders who "can triumph over any obstacle and beat all odds by dedicating their entire lives to the children they serve" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) as the depth of the work must be sustained and continually reviewed for efficacy and impact. School and district leaders and teachers are challenged to find alternative methods of Ela instruction that will engage the reluctant adolescent reader and continue to reach towards standards based teaching and learning. "Standards- based reform explicitly localizes accountability for students learning with the school and the people who work in in it, and carries the increasingly explicit message that students learn largely from what goes on inside the schools" (Elmore, 2000, p. 9). Public school educators have a professional imperative to see that all children are in the classrooms of competent teachers who are able to meet their reading and learning needs. This research will explore the pilot of a push in team teaching intervention model in grades seven and eight as an alternative instructional method of reading intervention as it works in complement to the core English language arts instructional frame.

Context of learning matters as learning to read and write is a highly complex skill (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). In order for transfer to occur, students must be given time as transference is an "active process" (Bransford, 2000, p. 236). Additionally, "Knowledge that is taught in a variety of contexts is more likely to support flexible transfer than knowledge that is taught in a single context" (Bransford, 2000, p. 236). In other words, if students are taught skills in an isolated reading intervention and never practice them in a highly complex core classroom setting, it should not be surprising when transference of skill or understanding does not occur. Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein, and Mentis (2008) discuss the work of Feuerstein's (1980) that indicated that both thinking and psychological theory supports this concept as "episodic grasps of reality" where students view their experiences across the day as a set of isolated incidents with

little connection (Costa & Kallick, 2008; Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein & Mentis, 2008). This concept support the habits of mind theories or what Costa and Kallick (2008) refers to as "Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations" where students are able to develop schema between "episodes" in their day to support them using the skills and thinking strategies they have developed in one class into another class. The concept of the pilot of the push in team taught intervention model, was that students are taught the discreet reading strategies and skills they would have learned in an isolated reading class within the Ela extended block and provided the opportunity to further practice and develop those skills in small groups working on complex tasks within the core curriculum. This learning environment would create opportunities that make the targeted skills and strategies an embedded part of their learning and not practices that were used solely in the isolated small group work of a pull out intervention.

The demands of the twenty first century encourage innovation; collaboration is valued as an integral skill (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2007). The size and infrastructure of a middle school often leaves little to no time for collaboration in order for teachers to plan instruction that meets the the literacy needs of their students or the ability to personalize instruction beyond the one size fits all mentality (Cramer & Nevin, 2006; Morgan, Williams, Clark, Hatteberg, Hauptmam, Kozel, & Paris, 2013). Additionally, within a system where effective collaboration is a desired learning outcome for students, often students are working in classes where the teacher is one person, one authority, who is working in isolation. It is rare that students get to see modeling of engaged collaboration between adults. Dissimilar to the elementary one room or two room instructional model, middle school students travel across the day, working in several classrooms that all have its own individual classroom culture (Moje, 1996). Middle school teachers depend on what Routman (2014) refers to as "professional trust"

amongst colleagues that as middle school students travel across the day and across the middle school grade levels that teachers will continue to address student learning needs in the content areas. Reading teachers and English language arts teachers may share some elements of professional trust, however, the infrastructure does not necessarily correlate or complement their work with students as teachers are working in fragmented section of the day between the reading intervention time and the core English language arts classroom instruction. In a middle school structure, often students are placed in remedial reading classes or literacy intervention blocks may not work in coherence or compliment to the core classroom instruction, creating another silo of practice that can't be capitalized on across the school day or within content area classes. Whether or not both teachers have similar expectations for student learning outcomes using universal data points, the collaboration is not typically represented. School leaders need to continue to find ways in which to maximize teacher contact time and improve communication between core classroom teachers and remedial reading support staff through authentic and meaningful collaboration instead of both teachers working in isolation from each other.

Statement of the Problem

Students' ability to read proficiently and teachers' ability to provide strong literacy instruction has been the cornerstone of educational research and reform for decades as research has indicated that proficient reading skills are strongly correlated to academic, personal, and professional success (National Endowment of the Arts, 2007; RAND 2002). Researchers have grappled with teachers' best practices around how to meet the needs of struggling readers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; Roberts, Torgeson, Boardman, & Scammaca, 2008). Educators have been through several iterations of policy that have shifted the way teachers complete their work including No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), findings of

NAEP (2015) and the National Reading Panel (2000, 2006) reports, the creation and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the effects of current standardized testing results of the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) and the updated Student Achievement Test (SAT) and the growing knowledge of the importance and impact of strong literacy skills for all students. All students must be taught by teachers who are "highly qualified" and within an English language arts classrooms there may be readers who are struggling, but do not qualify for additional special education services (Shanahan, 2006). Secondary teachers may or may not have background knowledge to teach struggling readers with methods that can close the achievement gap or how to support a reader who struggles. Additionally, teachers are consistently fighting the struggle to cover the curriculum, meet the standards, and provide high quality rigorous instruction to all students. Adolescents provide additional complexity when designing and implementing instruction. Adolescents who are disenfranchised readers have unique needs, and if those needs are not met, student motivation continues to diminish (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Guthrie, Solomon, & Rinehart, 1997; Ho & Guthrie, 2013; Tovani, 2000). Disenfranchised readers continue grow in personal loathing and disdain for reading (Graves et al., 2011). Furthermore, adolescents have competing motivations around reading that includes seeing the value of reading, feeling pressured by peers about reading, and also seeing reading materials as not interesting or too difficult (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Ho & Guthrie, 2013). Reading intervention and core instruction can no longer exist in "balkanized domains" where intervention and core instruction is in competition rather than coherence and in complement of both the efforts of the English language arts teacher and the reading teacher (RAND, 2002). While there is research on the merits and weaknesses of a co-teaching model that includes a special education teacher or a paraprofessional as the second teacher in the classroom,

this case study focused on a team teaching approach between the English language arts teacher and the reading teacher to provide a hybrid learning environment that did not previously exist between a reading interventionist and an Ela teacher (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Friend, 2008). Federal and state department legislation have made efforts to support schools and school systems creating a local infrastructure that provides students a systematic approach to addressing the achievement gap through targeted and focused instruction. The Connecticut State Department of Education (2008) states:

> This systemic approach ensures that all teachers are working toward goals that all students receive instruction in the same competencies regardless of which teacher they happen to have. Without this kind of approach, no matter how hardworking individual teachers may be, the lack of coordination and consistency across classrooms or grades may render the system ineffective for many students. (p. 17)

A step to improve the overall impact of both core classroom instruction and intervention is to build opportunities where students can immediately apply reading comprehension skills to authentic, engaging, and meaningful work so that the work between the two are complementary (RAND, 2002).

Reading intervention programs have been under the accountability microscope and have gained further scrutiny since the creation of the Response to Intervention Initiative (RTI) which Connecticut refers to as the Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) initiative (Solis et al., 2014; Fisher & Ivey, 2006). Reading intervention plans offer a solution though those solutions are far from guaranteed as often there are missing components to a programmed reading intervention. School districts need to challenge themselves to look at teacher

professional development and innovative approaches to reading instruction at the school and district level, though the research for this type of work is lacking (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; Ciullo et al., 2016). In secondary education, both middle school and high school teachers find themselves working with students who struggle to learn and who are unable to interpret, comprehend, or even decode grade level texts because their reading foundations were weak which directly impacts their ability to read, comprehend, or interpret grade level texts (Roberts et al., 2008) and while elementary intervention as instituted by the SRBI has been better documented, the efficacy of middle and high school reading intervention may not have caught up (Ciullo et al., 2016; Scammacca et al., 2007; Wanzek et al., 2013; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003).

Educators are working in a heightened accountability system that has reinforced the importance of meaningful and targeted instruction for all students. Results documented in The Nation's Report Card (NAEP) indicate there has shown various levels of progress of reading proficiency in Connecticut across since 2009 (Table 1.1; Table1.2; Table1.3). Reading achievement continues to be at the forefront of educators' priority list. Continual empirical research finds that if students are not proficient readers by the age of eight, students' long-term success can be compromised (NAEYC, 1998). Additionally, despite local and national reform to increase rigor across all classrooms by incorporating the Common Core State Standards for literacy in both narrative and informational texts, the *National Report Card* (2015) indicates that despite being slightly above the national average Connecticut's results over the past few years have shown some increases in grade 12 while student progress in grade 4 and grade 8 remained relatively flat in reading achievement according to results of the NAEP testing in reading. According the *Reading Framework for the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (2015) students are expected to read grade level passages and answer both multiple choice and

constructed response questions that indicates whether students are able to: understand the written text they have read; develop and interpret meanings of text they have read; and use meaning as "appropriate to type of text, purpose, and situation" (AIR, 2015, p. iv).

Table 1.1: *Connecticut Snapshot Grade 4 NAEP: Achievement Level Percentages* (IES, 2015).

Year	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
2015	26	31	31	11
2013	24	33	31	12
1998	24	33	32	11

Table 1.2: *Connecticut Snapshot Grade 8 NAEP: Achievement Level Percentages* (IES, 2015).

Year	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
2015	18	39	37	6
2013	17	38	39	6
1998	19	41	37	3

Table 1.3: *Connecticut Snapshot Grade 12 NAEP: Achievement Level Percentages* (IES 2015).

Year	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
2013	18	33	41	9
2009	22	34	36	7

*Note that Grade 12 was not assessed in 2015

The achievement gap continues to cause national concern as measured through the NAEP scores (U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Solis et al., 2014) and as accountability measures increase providing secondary English language arts teachers and reading teachers the appropriate

support and professional learning can be a challenge for leaders. Attitudes towards reading in adolescents decrease between grade four and grade eight (McKenna et al., 2012). Secondary school reform efforts continue to struggle between traditional teaching practices and the progressive needs of a twenty first century learner (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). Additionally, educational reform is at an all-time high. Prior to No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation, education already had become a fertile ground for faddism. The overused yet somewhat critically accurate analogy of the pendulum swinging back and forth has left educators disenchanted even previous to the onslaught of high stakes accountability reform. Secondary school reform calls for leadership to consider alternative and innovative methods for reaching students who struggle to meet priority state standards and to consider new or alternative approaches through curricular approach and through instructional practices challenging traditional approaches to reading and writing instruction in the secondary setting (Solis et al., 2014). Additionally, with the CCSS (2010) adopted across the majority of the nation, the platform has been set for textbook and educational resource industry to capitalize on districts' need to reach even higher levels of academic achievement for students to be what is referred to as College and Career Ready (Readiness). School districts continue to weed through years of purchased programs and fight the current plague of products that promise an ideal learning system that met the needs of all learners instead of facing the reality that educators need to engage school systems with long term improvement plans that will take grit and a culture that is willing to admit it is time to embrace necessary changes (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). Educators need to take a step back from the empty promises of a new angled program and concentrate on strengthening the efficacy and collaboration of teachers, especially teachers who work with adolescent students who have reading difficulties. Additional research may be needed in order

connect both the cognitive factors of reading difficulty and how the culture and climate of the Ela classroom and other classrooms may affect a student's perceptions of themselves as a reader or impact their attitude toward reading (Klauda & Guthrie, 2014; McKenna et al., 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine an alternative method for delivering reading intervention to students who were struggling with reading comprehension through a team teaching push in model. The action research was conducted in one district across three schools. The researcher reviewed the implementation process of the pilot year of the push in team teaching intervention model and gathered feedback from participants. The catalyst of this instructional and intervention shift was complex. Through the findings of an etic study completed for this district, many recommendations for change were prioritized for the middle school intervention model. The priorities included that the school system needed to identify an aligned intervention process that allowed for students to have additional time working on literacy skills. In order to institute this recommendation, several steps needed to occur including a study of former instructional practices within the district which was used as the retrospective review. The reading intervention model used before the push in team teaching pilot supported struggling readers in a pull out service delivery model that used varied commercial programs. Students who received reading intervention were pulled from social studies classes. Students were being supported in varied reading and writing strategies in the pull out intervention model, students were missing chunks of content area knowledge and the opportunity to apply the learned skills within a grade level social studies class within authentic text thereby creating a further deficit (Dieker & Little, 2005). Additionally, students showed some success as they transitioned back to social studies classes, however, there was not clear data that articulated if the reading

intervention supported student achievement within core classes, as the work done in intervention was not correlated directly to the core curriculum of any class nor were the strategies taught and practiced in intervention employed consistently within core academic classes. Additionally, there needed to be a shift in core instruction to support all readers to gain further time reading and working on specific reading and writing skills. Vacca (2014) as cited in Wepner, Strickland, and Quatroche (2014) identified tenets of programming that directly support the adolescent reader. These tenets include the following: access to a wide variety of text that is both at the students' independent reading level and also high interest; instruction that builds students' reading skills and also encourages and motivates students to want to read highly complex texts and think critically while they are reading; use of common assessments both formative and other that will help teachers design responsive lessons for students; teachers who are expert in reading who can model and provide direct instruction on reading strategies ; reading teachers who can offer instruction and appropriate and meaningful interventions; teachers who are aware of the needs of adolescent readers and adolescents in general; and finally cultivating support in the greater community (Wepner, Strickland, & Quatrioche, 2014). Secondary school schedules are complex and also influence the structure of intervention practices. Secondary schedules have many moving parts and leave little time for collaboration (Cramer & Nevin, 2006). The push in team teaching model was created to support students within core English language arts classes, give them additional time to work on core reading and writing skills, and have interventions complement the instruction of the English language arts instructional block.

Phase I of this action research included completing a retrospective case study review, a review of literature on the needs of the adolescent reader and team teaching, and the design and implementation the pilot team teaching push in intervention model, regularly reviewed the team

teaching model in collaboration of the updated curricular and instructional expectations. Phase II explored how team teachers and administrators perceived the alternative method of intervention support through data collection, identified specified professional learning needs for team teachers, and provided a tiered professional learning module for team teachers. This research was qualitative action research that included a retrospective case study review, a pilot of a teaching model, and a professional learning cycle to meet the identified needs of teachers participating in the pilot model. Phase I and Phase II were planned with the iterative lens of action research (Clauset, Lick, & Murphy, 2008; Coughlan & Brannick, 2010). The researcher worked to design action research that shifted professional learning across circles of influence moving between a school based team including interviewing local administration, to a district based team including the full English language arts department, reading teachers, and a sample of special education teachers, to working with individual teacher teams as reform can happen across inside and outside influences (Dieker & Little, 2005). The researcher analyzed the data to investigate the implications of the team taught push in model as large group action research that "focuses on an intervention, its impact, and the subsequent change that it motivates" (Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 419).

Leadership and the ability to influence change was also a focus within the action research and is represented in the ethnographic reflection. The action research was designed to improve the researcher's ability to lead and implement a district wide intervention plan for English language arts in the middle school grades that compliments the core academic expectations of the updated Ela curriculum as the school district was piloting updated curriculum units and was shifting the instructional approach to English language arts that coincided with the timing of this exploratory research. This research will add to the professional literature on the nuances of team

teaching with an Ela teacher and a reading teacher working together and expand the concept of the team teaching or co-teaching model. This research may also present a potential alternative intervention model for struggling adolescent readers. Additionally, this research will add to the professional literature on large-scale district level action research as the research was conducted across three schools and four teaching teams (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). The research may also add to the literature on school or school system's improvement and teachers' capacity to change as cited by Fullan, Cuttress, Kilcher (2009) as cited in Fullan (2009) "schools and their communities must develop new cultures of learning in order to improve" (Fullan, 2009).

In summary, this action research included several phases and considered several lenses of inquiry. Teachers' strengths and areas of professional need were considered carefully throughout each phase of the research and additionally were considered when collecting and analyzing teacher survey results and teacher feedback gathered from ongoing professional work within the district. All information was aggregated and direct quotes from teachers or administration were not used in this study, as the researcher's positionality in the district was considered a factor in this action research and the researcher was committed to gathering authentic data from participants. Finally, this exploration provided the researcher insight into her own efficacy around the leading of a district wide shift in pedagogy and a shift in the instructional approach both within language arts and the reading intervention as evidenced in an ethnographic reflection. The researcher believes that change in education is a collaborative process. This research had several factors that caused a change as discussed by Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) as cited by Fullan (2002). Ela teachers were developing new skills, gaining new knowledge, building program coherence, and had access to new resources (Fullan, 2002). The changes made to curriculum and instructional approaches were considered when making the

changes to intervention approaches, as when a part of a system shifts, other elements must also be considered for their appropriateness and compliment to the changes made. Phase I included conducting a retrospective case study, conducting and analyzing research on best practices for adolescent readers, and piloting a team teaching push in model. The purpose of conducting a retrospective case study as part of the action research within Phase I included illuminating or exploring innovation and ideas that may work within an organization (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Remer, 2012). During this time the English language arts curriculum and instructional approach was changing. In Phase II the researcher gathered data from teachers and administration on their perceptions of the pilot year, coding and analyzing both teacher and administrative data for themes, and building a responsive professional learning intervention for teachers who were in the second phase of the push in team teaching model. The researcher explored the perceptions of the push in team taught reading intervention model as part of the action research cycle. The researcher investigated both Ela and reading teachers' perceptions of their instructional methods within the team teaching model and if their instructional methods have or have not changed as a result of the push in team teaching model pilot. The researcher used data to determine next phases of professional development for the entire Ela department and also designed learning sessions specific to the needs of the team teachers within the context of the full department Ela professional development. The researcher explored the efforts of the push in team teaching model as it has been implemented over a year and a half. The professional development sessions focused on best instructional practices for all students and were scaffolded for additional supports needed for teachers who work in the team teaching push in intervention model (Guskey, 1986). The researcher was aware of her perspectives and positionality within the studied district

and took steps including thick rich descriptive data and member checking while gathering and analyzing data to make conclusions that were dependable, trustworthy, and authentic.

The design of this research is complex, but the researcher believes that the retrospective case study was beneficial to the action research cycle for the researcher as Lapan et al. (2012) point out, the case study lends itself to change and shift throughout the course of the study which is complimentary to that of action research as the focus of action research is to support change that will benefit local conditions (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Tuckman & Harper, 2012). As the researcher gathered information within the retrospective case study as part of the action research, the researcher remained open to the being flexible and "open to other findings", as the researcher does not know "how the case will unfold" (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 261). The researcher used a constructivist stance in elements of the retrospective case study and during the pilot year as learning in the district is co-constructed between participants. The researcher also took a post positivist stance when data was analyzed and a pragmatic stance in designing the pilot and the design of the intervention. The researcher's stance was co-constructivist for the professional learning intervention offered in Phase II as the effort of the action research was to construct tiered professional learning that supported teachers both in the team teaching pilot and the remaining teachers within the district and also served as a bridge for team teachers to further collaborate.

Researcher's Position

The researcher is in an administrative position in the district being studied which required the researcher to make decisions around data collection and reporting. The researcher held an emic and etic position within the district where the study was conducted as the researcher does not work on a daily basis with the teachers who were part of this study, but the researcher does

work with all English language arts and reading teachers in the school system. The researcher is a supervisor in central office who reports to the assistant superintendent. The researcher's position is to work with all of schools in the district on curriculum, instruction, and assessment including schools at the elementary level, middle school level, and high school level. The positionality of the researcher gives the researcher a view of the entire school system, with opportunity to plan longitudinally prek-12. In addition to supervising the Ela department, the supervisor works with building principals, coordinates district professional learning for teachers, and reviews data at the grade level, school level, and district level regularly. The researcher works with reading teachers and literacy coaches k-12 to align the work across the school system.

Operational Terminology

RTI (Response to Intervention) - a comprehensive approach to ensure that students receive the instruction and or intervention they need in order to make adequate progress (Fisher & Frey, 2010)

SRBI (Scientific Research Based Intervention) - The Connecticut State Department of Education refers to the comprehensive approach to instruction through multiple tiers. All students participate in tier 1 (core curriculum measured by both local common assessments, benchmark assessments, and standardized tests), approximately 20% of our students participate within tier 2 (small group instruction that is fluid depending on student need), and finally within that 20% approximately 3-5% may also qualify for tier 3 intervention services (even smaller group instruction usually conducted by an interventionist either inside or outside of the classroom).

CCSS- The Common Core State Standards (2010) are a list of skills and knowledge that lead students to college and career readiness

CCS -The state of Connecticut has adopted the Common Core State Standards as the Connecticut Core Standards

Ela Teacher (Secondary Certified Teacher 7-12) - A teacher who teaches English language arts

Reading Teacher (Certified Reading Teacher 1-12) - A teacher who works specifically with students who need reading support. For the purpose of this study, teachers who are working in the 6-8 middle school setting

Reading Interventionist - Either a Reading Teacher (see above) or a special education teacher who is offering additional, supplemental, or parallel instruction in reading

Literacy – Literacy is "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context" (Literacy Worldwide, 2015)

Team Teaching- A teaching team consisting of two or more professional collaborating, planning, and delivering complementary instruction within a classroom period. Based on the definition of Cramer and Nevin (2006) team teaching consists of a partnership that is mutually beneficial for all parties involved as teachers of content areas work with an instructional strategy expert. In this action research the content area teacher is the English language arts teacher and the strategy expert is the reading intervention teacher.

Research Questions

Action Research: Research Questions:

1.) Based on data gathered in the pilot year of the team taught push in reading intervention model, what are the teachers and administrations perceptions of the strengths and areas of needed professional growth?

2.) What are the advantages or limitations of team teaching as an approach to middle school intervention?

Ethnographic Reflection: Research Questions

1.) How might action research be used to inspire large scale transformation in a school district?

2.) How has action research impacted the researcher as an educational leader?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review is organized into the following categories: the role of theory in this study, the needs of the adolescent reader; and empirical research on teaming and co-teaching.

Nature of the Study and the Conceptual Framework

An exploratory action research design was used as the framework for this study. The research began with a retrospective case study review that included one school district's approach to core classroom instruction in English language arts (Tier 1 instruction) and the instruction and assessment practices of reading intervention in the middle school for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention. The study was encouraged by the findings of an etic report completed for the district outlining necessary changes needed to be made to instruction and intervention practices. Research on Ela and reading instruction, concept- based curriculum, the needs of adolescent readers, and the concept of co-teaching or team teaching were used to design a pilot model of push in team teaching intervention in an extended Ela instructional block as Phase 1 of the action research. Phase II of the action research included the study of the piloted reading intervention model and the development of a professional learning series designed for team teachers in a push in, team taught, concept based curricular model. The research used a convenient sample of teacher teams who were a part of a pilot team teaching intervention model in grades 7 and 8 and the administrators who work in each of the three middle school buildings. The teams of teachers consist of a reading teacher who may work with one or more teachers in a double Ela instructional block and an English language arts teacher.

Role of Theory

Social Cognitive Theory

Theory impacts the work of research to guide the process and aide researchers in collecting useful data (Neuman, 2005, p. 76). This study includes a professional learning cycle that was designed based on feedback from the pilot year of the push in team teaching model. The researcher used that information to create coordinated professional learning sessions for both the full Ela department and also team teachers which could be considered challenging but not impossible (Bransford, 2000, p. 205). By raising awareness of andragogy, what inspires adults to learn, and engaging in meaningful action research, the system can create and promote long-term sustained changes translating research into an action plan (Fullan, 2009; Marzano, 2002). Adult learners are motivated and self-directed, they grow as they continue to find value in self-fulfilling professional roles that create opportunities for them to be self-directed and problem solvers (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Taylor (2007) makes a call to action for educational researchers not to remain complacent as there "is still much that is not known about transformative learning and much to learn about how people revise their interpretations about the world around them" (p. 189). Leaders continue to work to increase teacher capacity by focusing on the mind shift between teachers being "taught" how to be professionals to teachers becoming more reflective practitioners who reap the ongoing benefits of working with other professionals and to learn collectively through authentic collaborative practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Dweck, 2006). Merriam & Bierema (2014) summarizes the purpose of this work: "it is important to acknowledge that all educators are learners first. Being an educator is an honor and responsibility, and striving to continually improve as educators is a lifelong learning endeavor"

(p. 251). Additionally, it is through the improvement of our system of professional development that our impact increases exponentially, as social learning has the potential to grow and not just become an artifact of neglected reform instead it is heavy lifting of growing and transforming school cultures and creating conditions for long term change in school systems (Haergraves & Fullan, 2012).

Merriam and Bierema (2014) define theory in five orientations: behaviorist, humanist, cognitivist, social cognitivist, and constructivist (p. 26). The dominate theory in this action research includes the lens of the humanist orientation as humanist psychology contains three main areas: andragogy (adult learning), self-directed learning, and transformative learning theory (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 31). Theory, or social theory, is defined as "a system of interconnected ideas that condenses and organizes knowledge about the social world" (Neuman, 2005, p. 50). Theory can be further defined as the thinking frame that binds systems together through focused and systemic practices (Knight, 2007). School districts are dynamic moving organizations. Neuman (2005) states that theory can take on two directions, either deductive of inductive, the difference being, "deductive theorizing requires you to begin with a clearly thought- out theoretical picture, with inductive theorizing you can begin with a general topic and some vague ideas that you then refine and elaborate into the more exact theoretical concepts" (p. 60). Social organizations like school systems are highly interconnected and interdependent and the needs of the people, adults and students, are consistently shifting because of both internal and external catalysts (Neuman, 2005). When one part of educational system or instructional core shifts, the other parts have to shift as well, this is what creates coherence within a system or network (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Tietal, 2009; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This study also considers the dynamic and social needs of the adolescent learner. Adolescents also process

learning differently and the impact of motivation theory influences their engagement, achievement and efficacy (Guthrie et al., 1997; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Klauda & Guthrie, 2014). The researcher considered the social cognitive needs of both the adult learner and the adolescent learner as within this work, both the needs of the teacher to develop his or her teaching ability through team teaching is strengthened by working in collaboration of another teaching expert with different expertise as the students' self-efficacy and ability as a reader is reinforced through authentic engaged practice of skills in context.

The Impact on the Adult Learner

Professional development through collaborative co-teaching could be considered a co-constructivist or social constructivist approach. In education, research shows the evolution that the one-size fits all approach to professional development has to be abandoned, yet some adult learners still see it as the preferred way to be trained in a new initiative removing all accountability moving the information from passive acceptance to implementation, revision, coaching, and finally as part of long term sustained change (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Educational leaders must consider the changing needs of teachers and provide adults professional learning opportunities that are meaningful and make greater efforts to understand how adults learn best. The goal of professional learning is no longer to be passive receptacles of information, but instead to seek knowledge to become a more active thinker and better practitioner, or co-construct a new reality or thinking behavior; Kanucka and Anderson (1999) state:

> We must bring our learners' prior knowledge to the forefront if they are to apply their current understandings to new situations in order to construct new knowledge. To achieve this, educators need to spend time understanding learner's current perspectives and, based

on this information, incorporate learning activities that have real world relevance for each learner. (Introduction)

According to Donaldson (2009) as cited in Mezirow & Taylor (2009), action research requires "both critical reflection and action by leaders to change the structures that constrain their own leadership performance and their organization's performance in fostering learning in others" (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). This research reviewed the genesis and progress of a push in Ela instructional model in grades seven and eight and built a professional learning action research cycle that incorporated professional learning activities that were authentic to team teachers and addressed the greater needs of the teachers within the respective departments of language arts and of reading.

Self-Efficacy and Reflection

Albert Bandura (1989) describes a model of "reciprocal causation" (p. 1175), as human beings do not act of learn as strictly individual units. Instead, humans develop self -efficacy as a social phenomenon in which people learn and grow. In addition, one of Bandura's (1989) influencing factors of increased self -efficacy is the individual having control over "events that affect their lives" (p. 1175). Central to this study is that adults are more motivated to continue with an endeavor if they have a higher sense of self efficacy and additionally one element that contributes to efficacy is the locus of control (Bandura, 1989; Tschannen- Moran & Hoy, 1998). The same is true of adolescents; "engaged readers have deep-seated motivational goals, which include being committed to the subject matter, wanting to learn the content, believing in one's own ability, and wanting to share understanding from learning" (Guthrie et al. 1997, p. 439). The researcher used the social cognitive frame during the case study phase of the research as the researcher believes that efficacy plays a part in teacher effectiveness as "self efficacy beliefs

affect thought patterns that may be self aiding or self hindering" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175) and that social learning the perception of peers also has a direct effect on the needs of the adolescent reader (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013). Additionally, the concept of agency was explored as Bandura (2006) describes agency as having four core properties: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self- reflectiveness. Teachers participating the team taught push in intervention model are not working in isolation, instead their co-existence prompts a different perspective on teaching and teaching praxis. Teachers in a team teaching configuration work to blend what Bandura (2006) refers to as the three modes of agency, individual, proxy, and collective as many "things they seek are achievable only by working together through interdependent effort" (p. 165). Theoretically this research explores that teachers working in isolation in a traditional instructional model are not as impactful as teachers who are interdependent and synergized in efforts to reduce the achievement gap for disenfranchised or struggling adolescent readers.

Teachers continue to navigate growing accountability measures, increased public focus on standardized test scores, and increased expectations for student learning; these changing foci could diminish a teacher's self-efficacy. Potentially group or collective efficacy could also weaken, as the increased individual pressures on individual teacher performance lends itself to a competitive edge between professionals, fostering frustration for those whose work may feel disconnected or counterproductive. Working together with a specified student population sharing common goals and co-constructing a learning plan will inevitably bring challenges not present in other class constructs, however, it is through engaged authentic collaboration that both individual and collective efficacy may persevere and sustain professional efforts (Bandura, 1989). Through the push in team teaching model, teachers succeed together, unified under common learning targets for readers, as opposed to the pull out intervention model, where teachers may have

competing goals or varying priorities based on personal pedagogy and available materials. As Bandura (1989) indicates, “environments have causes as do behaviors” (p. 1182). Adults are responsible for the environment they create and can be influenced by that environment. The team teaching model may create a catalyst for change as the environment has changed fundamentally with two adults working in constant proximity. This research explores how the team taught environment provides a different type of motivation for teachers and also creates a different contextual and environmental support for students working with both an Ela and a reading teacher.

Transformative Learning Theory

Elmore (2000) states: “The existing institutional structure of public education does one thing very well: It creates a normative environment that values idiosyncratic, isolated, and individualistic learning at the expenses of collective learning” (p. 20); teachers and educational leaders need to break this habit. “Leadership must create conditions that value learning as both an individual and a collective good” (Elmore, 2000, p. 20). Transformational long-term change can only be sustained if the culture of the learning community is able to shift. Adult learners co-construct knowledge; professional learning experiences and specified areas of expertise could create a cultural shift around meeting the needs of adolescent readers. Professional development and increased instructional efficacy relies on the concept of praxis. Knight (2007) determined that praxis is “not memorizing a new routine so we can teach it in our classes exactly the way it has been memorized” instead, “ true praxis is established when teachers have a change to explore, prod, stretch, and recreate whatever they are studying” (Knight, 2007, p. 49).

Educators and educational leaders have learned that the need for sustained professional learning has shifted (Guskey 1986; Guskey, 1988; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Professional

development was traditionally defined as an outside expert infiltrating schools on a one shot professional development day leaving teachers with a product that they may or may not see as the best solution to address their students' learning needs (Guskey, 1986; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). Adult learners' needs, what motivates them to learn and change practices and behaviors, and the need for continuous embedded professional learning are the impetus for long term sustainable change (Haergraves & Fullan, 2012). Fullan and Haergraves (1991) research supports that school reform has failed repeatedly and their forward thinking research inspired hope in the collaborative social nature of humanity and the impact of social learning. Walpole and McKenna (2015) as sighted in Gambrell and Morrow (2015) have created a basic PD logic map which outlines a simplistic vision of the effects of professional development (Figure 2.1).

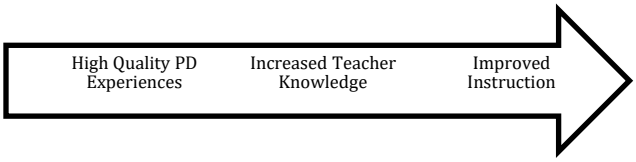

Figure 2.1: *Walpole and McKenna (2015) Professional Development Logic Map*

Kitchenham (2008) outlines three learning processes in which adults make meaning through Mezirow's (1985) revised transformative learning theory. Adults learn "within schemes", meaning that they expand current thinking, and "revise their present systems of knowledge" (p. 111). Also adults learn "new meaning schemes" that are "compatible with existing schemes" which allows for learning and prompts new learning to attach to current schema and broaden conceptual knowledge (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 111). The concept of building upon existing schema is also relevant when considering how to meet the needs of adolescent readers as research indicates, adolescent motivation is positively impacted when students are working in a learning environment that provides contextualization (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Contextualization processes set tasks which provide students autonomy to research and grow

thinking within a bigger concept, using informational text to research broader (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Context and design influence both the engagement of the adult learner and the adolescent reader.

Within education, there are a lot of terminologies used to describe what has been commonly defined as best instructional practice. Adult readiness to implement new instructional techniques is also through experiential practices (Merriam, 2014). Teaching systems have shifted from the passive banking system of knowledge transfer to a more co-constructed experience where the teacher serves as facilitator of knowledge, not keeper of knowledge. Administration and teachers need to continue to explore opportunities for teachers to improve upon current practice through a coherent instructional framework, as co-constructors of best practices for adolescent readers instead of or in addition to sending students out to receive intervention not that is correlated to the work of the classroom environment. The same is to be said when shifting teacher practice specifically around literacy as many teachers may have working knowledge of what is to be considered best practice around the instruction of reading and writing through English language arts certification and methodology training, however, it is only through authentic and meaningful engaged activity that this predisposed notion of best practice can attach to teacher practice that must reach higher levels of student achievement from that which they have been previously trained, shifting from a traditional teacher centered model to a progressive student centered model. Paulo Freire's (2005) research supports the concept that education through the "banking" method where "teachers deposit information to those students whom the teacher deems worthy of receiving the gift of knowledge (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 107). Additional research proves that this is not the way that students learn best, or the way that adults learn best, yet schedules and tradition continue to reinforce status quo in secondary education. This research

will explore the concept that it is through increased praxis, and autonomy as "autonomous learners, to make more informed choices, become more critically reflective" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 95).

Learning conditions matter for both students and teachers as the correct learning environment can provide open, safe, and supportive learning experiences where adults and students reflect and engage in activities that support explicit skill instruction and engage students in meaningful and authentic learning opportunities that are aligned to content area expectations (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Teachers and administrators need to identify and support systems that align the instructional efforts of all practitioners working with students. Efforts should focus on identifying methods that strengthen the overarching school system and those efforts should include authentic engaged collaboration and not what Fullan and Haergraves (1991) refers to teachers working in an isolated practice, on an island left to make decisions independent without substantial feedback in a "culture of individualism" (p. 52). Elmore (2000), "this phenomenon holds at all levels: individual teachers invent their own practice in isolated classrooms, small knots of like-minded practitioners operate in isolation from their colleagues within a given school, or schools operate as an exclusive enclaves of practice in isolation form other schools" (p. 20). Elmore further highlights that the good of one or the good of all may feel it is necessary to move into an action phase, "in none of these instances is there any expectation that individuals or groups are obliged to pursue knowledge as both an individual and a collective good" (p. 20). Teachers work in high levels of isolation; remedial reading teachers work in high levels of isolation, and administration works in high levels of isolation. Sometimes the only reflection of collective work is measured through high stakes evaluation practices and through data generated by high stakes testing and local benchmarks. This research makes an effort to create clear

through lines between the work and efforts of each individual and to create higher levels of coherence amongst all stakeholders. Taylor (2007) completed a critical review of transformative learning theory and how it applies to action research. After the pilot year, teachers engaged in a series of professional learning sessions. The design of the professional learning included time for teachers to work in collaboration with their team teacher and also opportunity to work with other grade level teacher teams. Collaborative efforts need the time, focus, and intention to make meaningful work, otherwise initiatives such as team teaching have the potential to become another lost initiative. Teachers who are consistently able to engage in self-reflective processes and build off of other teachers thinking have the possibility to grow in their praxis. School and district leaders efforts need to continue to promote good practices while being mindful of teacher burn out, initiation saturation, and grow the efficacy and praxis of faculty. Through a push in support model, teachers have the opportunity to co-construct learning plans that support the needs of readers performing below grade level and offer authentic tiered groups that support the needs of students within classes receiving push in support.

Transformative learning is "the process of learning through critical self- reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights" (Mezirow & Associates, 1990, p. xvi). "Transformative learning theory is essentially a learning process of making meaning of one's life experiences" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 84). Cultural shifts in learning organizations could presumably happen with ease, as a learning institution by definition would encourage a learning environment where educators were in a constant state of growth or deeper understanding. Additionally, in the pace of modern society and our hyper-augmented nature, change is perceived as rapid, though true transformation is

increasingly more difficult. As Mezirow et al., (1990) states " because we must accommodate to a life of continual and rapid change, most of what we learn is the result of our efforts to solve problems, from the infant's problem of how to get fed to the adult's problem of how to understand the meaning of life" (p. 5). This is not the case with some schools or in some districts. Instead, teachers have felt a sense of initiation saturation that has caused an even deeper resistance to the concept of change. The research of Datnow and Castellano (2000) questions if outside school reforms can sustain over time. They further encourage leaders to find additional opportunities in which teachers have ownership of the reform and additionally question if a scripted program can sustain over time (Datnow & Castellano, 2000, p. 793).

Through the questioning of assumptions and the shift or as Merriam & Bierema (2014) explains that Mezirow (1978, 2009) describes, a "disorienting dilemma" of the onslaught of education reform since NCLB, educational leaders and teachers find themselves questioning their practice and their own levels of efficacy. Continued school reform may create a catalyst for educators to make changes or shifts in their basic assumptions about teaching and learning, while it may cause other faculty and leaders to buckle down and become atrophied in fear of the unknown as teachers' belief systems directly impact the success or impetus for school level reform (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). Teacher evaluations adds another layer to the increasing levels of transparency and current school administration face as Mezirow (2009) calls a "disorienting dilemma" as the teacher evaluation process creates a tension of judgment in times of high accountability. Leaders need to transform school cultures to contain processes and systems that invite professionals to engage in critical and reflective process as a means to further develop themselves professionally (Whitehall, 2004). Taylor (2007) defines transformative learning theory as "uniquely adult, abstract, and idealized, grounded in the nature of human

communication" that captures "meaning making" (p. 173).Through team teaching, active collaboration and planning with student learning at the center of the work, team teaching professionals may have the opportunity to transform their instructional practices by engaging in ongoing and meaningful professional reflection.

Adolescent Readers

Various studies (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012; Solis et al., 2014) have indicated that adolescent readers have different needs than elementary readers, while the majority of the research on reading and reading intervention (RTI/ SRBI) is targeted toward elementary teachers. Multiple research studies articulate the significant needs of adolescent readers which are more complex as students move into the secondary school setting (Guthrie et al., 1997; King et al. 2012; RAND, 2002; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Wepner et al., 2014; Tovani, 2000). Adolescent readers closely associate their personal success as a reader based on their own perception of their competence (Gurthrie et al., 1997, Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; RAND, 2002; Tovani, 2000) Adolescent students need to engage in more volume reading which no small task for a middle school English language arts or reading teacher as a disenfranchised adolescent reader works incredibly hard all day to avoid doing the very activity that will strengthen their reading comprehension (McPeak & Trygg, 2007). Volume reading has to also be engaged reading, as true engagement supports academic literacy (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Multiple researchers indicate that students who read more, who have more time with eyes on text, and are actively engaged as readers become stronger readers (Allington, 2001; Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). There is no research that indicates if adolescent students become better readers by not reading (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). Traditional middle school and high schools' schedules offer students less time to engage in sustained reading of text (Greenleaf & Hinchman,

2009). More time with eyes on text and programs that emphasize specialized reading instruction need to be priorities for educational institutions (King- Sears & Bowman- Kruhm, 2010; Wepner et al., 2014). Adolescent literacy has evolved since the push for content area reading and writing, as the focus has shifted to the needs of the student and the way in which they will navigate communication in the twenty-first century (Wepner et al., 2014). The Common Core has also placed an additional emphasis on informational reading standards, thereby changing the infrastructure of reading instruction across all content areas (CCSS, 2010; Ho & Guthrie, 2013).

Additionally, adolescent readers are a complex case who need additional specialized instruction in the area of reading and secondary teachers do not feel adequately prepared for addressing students who are reading below grade level (Cantrell et al., 2013; Ho & Guthrie, 2013; McPeak & Trygg, 2007; Solis et al., 2014). Cantrell et al. (2013) state that reading research indicates that teachers take up to three years to implement a practice in strategic reading comprehension practices, and this work can be even more difficult for secondary teachers as they have little to no preparation for addressing students' reading difficulties (p. 28). According to studies by McPeak and Trygg (2007) common characteristics of struggling adolescent readers include readers are less fluent, they have less word knowledge, they have less conceptual or content knowledge, they have fewer strategies to self repair comprehension when it breaks down, and typically, adolescent readers who struggle do not like to read and do not choose reading as a leisure or pleasure activity. They further explain that the needs of readers shift between elementary school to middle school, students need a stronger sight vocabulary, as words become more complex across secondary school texts, students need to have a stronger understanding of text structures and genres, students need opportunities to develop both thinking and reasoning skills, and they need to develop a positive relationship with themselves as readers and see

reading as a critical life skill (McPeak & Trygg, 2007). Adolescents have several complex factors that impact their reading achievement including affirming motivations and undermining motivations (Klauda & Guthrie, 2014). The confounding variables of affirming motivation include: intrinsic motivation, value in the importance of reading, self-efficacy which is linked directly to social cognitive theory, and peer value on the importance for reading while the undermining motivations include: devalue, where students do not see the importance of reading as a practice, perceived difficulty where text is too complex and daunting for students to engage, and peer devalue is the disrespect from student's peers and the collective devaluing of general reading (Klauda & Guthrie, 2014). Through the research of Cantrell, Almansi, Carter, and Rintamaa (2013) teacher efficacy in the area of teaching reading directly impacted the fidelity of a prescribed reading intervention program. Teachers who were in this comparative study found that teachers in the sixth grade who had reported higher levels of teacher efficacy in the area of strategic reading instruction was positively related to students' results however, the implementation of the program was lesser than that of the ninth grade teachers who reported lower levels of efficacy in reading instruction had higher levels of implementation and that higher levels of implementation were related to students' growth in vocabulary (pp. 42-49). In order to show longitudinal success, adolescent readers may require more than just remedial reading programs delivered in isolation of classroom instruction often through a pull out intervention model including an instructional focus that meets their unique set of learning needs (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). This includes but not is not limited to explicit instruction on specific reading skills in an authentic learning environment, matching the reader to the appropriate text level, finding motivation to read despite the onslaught of distractions, and metacognitive strategies to keep readers active in their reading (Scammaca et al., 2007; Fisher & Ivey, 2006).

Research supports that in order to become stronger readers, adolescents need to read more texts or participate in higher levels of volume reading, not less, and school districts need to engage in work that provides an opportunity and a learning environment for students to do so (Fisher & Ivey, 2006). The "plunge" as it is referred to that occurs in fourth grade readers, impacts every grade there after which is increasingly problematic for adolescent readers in middle school and high school (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). As the reading text becomes harder, and opportunities for other activities beyond reading become more available (social media, after school activities, friendships and social pressures of middle school) the adolescent reader stops being a reader and spends the energy they do have trying to fake read or pretend to comprehend through classes enough to get by (Tovani, 2000). As texts become more complex, and students need to strengthen their ability to read multiple text types across multiple disciplines, the opportunities for students to be reading decrease due to schedules, configuration of middle school and junior high models. Empirical research supports a necessary shift in mindset for teachers when working with the adolescent reader as it is the teacher who has a higher impact on student learning than any materials or programs (Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008). As cited in Costa and Kallick (2009), Billmeyer (2009) summarizes a missing step in order to sustain and support a reader educators must remember that "the engagement in reading is not the product of strategies alone, but a fusion of strategies with mental dispositions" (Costa & Kallick, 2009, p. 116). In order to meet the needs of a struggling adolescent reader, their social needs also have to be considered as students and struggling readers are becoming more complex and teachers must work incredibly hard to keep student readers engaged in authentic reading and writing tasks (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Friend, 2008; Ho & Guthrie, 2013; Klauda & Guthrie, 2014; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003).

While major research from the National Reading Panel (2000) indicate that early intervention provides the strongest results in reading fluency and comprehension, additional research indicates that middle school readers can continue to benefit from targeted and meaningful intervention (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2010; Pressley, 2006; McPeak & Trygg 2007, RAND 2002). According to Scammacca et al. (2007) "Adolescence is not too late to intervene, and older students who participate in intervention can benefit" (p. 12). Additionally, adolescents have unique needs as readers and also have different needs than that of an elementary aged student in need of reading support (Fuchs et al., 2010; McPeak & Trygg, 2007). Many theoretical stances and interactions of models influence the research of reading and teachers working with adolescent readers (Roe, 2010). Additionally, researchers and teachers have not committed to one definition of differentiation in either theoretical or empirical work, instead much reading research is concentrated on a strand or topic within reading for example vocabulary and "how differentiation applies to that specific area" (Roe, 2010). Further work in this area is needed, as reading is a complex process and the areas ultimately need to work interdependently in order for students to grow as a reader as their learning needs are more complex (RAND, 2002).

Finding what motivates the adolescent reader can be a challenge, especially if the reader has not met with prior success or doesn't identify with being a reader or a writer (Guthrie et al., 1997; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Klauda & Guthrie, 2014; Tovani, 2000). As described in Gambrell & Morrow (2015) there are few studies that link intervention to motivation describing a study completed by Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006) who worked with two groups of students who had internal motivation to read a text versus external motivation to read a text (extrinsic motivating factor including memorizing information to take a test). The

study found that “students with intrinsic goals recalled the text more fully and reported more involvement in the reading that students with the extrinsic goals” (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015, p. 66). In order for students to engage in reading, they have to find it relevant to their learning and make connections to a topic or find something that is of high interest to them as a reader. Additional work by Guthrie et al. (1997) identifies the lack of motivation is reflected by the lack of independent reading adolescents engage in. Also, Guthrie et al. (1997) ascertain that there are at least two sources of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, identifying that students who are less successful readers lose their intrinsic desire to read as their sense of personal competence around reading deteriorates (p. 440). The research further explains that students in middle school are more prone to experience competition amongst peers as teacher tendency may lean toward “emphasizing the excellence of high performing students, rather than emphasizing the performance of all students on reading tasks” (p. 440), creating an additional layer of self-doubt in the mind of a struggling adolescent reader (Guthrie et al., 1997).

Additionally, the Department of Education (2008) released a set of recommended evidence -based reading intervention strategies that work with the adolescent reader. Recommendations included: “1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction; 2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction; 3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation; 4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning; 5. Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by a trained specialist” (Kamil et al., 2008, p. 7). While a balanced literacy classroom includes direct instruction of reading comprehension strategies, with the assistance of the reading teacher, focused Tier 2 instruction is ongoing within the context of classroom instruction this intensity can be increased by instructional grouping, instruction that enhances

and strengthens comprehension strategies in authentic core texts, and fluency and phonics work as needed within the class (McPeak & Trygg, 2007). Additionally, the assessments given in the core Ela classroom curriculum can also be used to assess the reading progress of the students who are receiving small group instruction (Snow & Biancorosa, 2003). As the meta-analysis conducted by Scammacca et al. (2007) indicated, reading comprehension measures given in the intervention setting often were shorter passages of text. The research of Cirino, Romain, Barth, Tolar, Fletcher, and Vaughn (2013) investigated whether there were patterns of overlap between isolated reading skills and found that the majority of students had difficulty in more than one domain, including word level reading, comprehension and fluency. In the Ela classroom, both the Ela and the Reading teacher can administer a more comprehensive suite of assessments, both quick formative comprehension check ins and longer performance task type assessments that measure students reading across multiple varied texts and are required to synthesize their thinking (McPeak & Trygg, 2007).

Dieker and Little (2005) emphasize the importance for general educators at the secondary level to provide needed support, appropriate materials, and ways to use materials effectively in the secondary school setting and a " collaborative infrastructure between general educators and special educators" (p. 276). Reading is one of the primary ways students are expected to process and master content information at the secondary level, as students are expected to read to learn once they are in the secondary level and if students continue to struggle with reading comprehension this will impact all of their course work. (Dieker & Little, 2005; Allington, 2001; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Using the skill of reading to understand content continues to grow as national attention shifts towards changes made on both the PSAT and SAT as standard measures of College and Career Readiness. Without collaborative conversations between reading

experts, literacy experts, and special education teachers, the gap for secondary struggling readers continues to plummet. Dieker and Little (2005) discuss spheres of influence and where the circle of reading influence shift between administration, core classroom teachers, and specialty area teachers. In this research scenario the specialty area teachers are not defined as reading teachers, but instead as special education teachers. The researchers ascertain that in order to reach school wide level of reform, educational leaders will need to capitalize further on collaborative structures within schools that includes co-teaching, coaching, team teaching, and problem solving teams. It is through these concerted efforts that instructional change can be made and sustained (Dieker & Little, 2005, p. 278). Through the team teaching approach, in collaboration between team teachers, administration, and teams, teachers can create a critical mass that can bring about improvements for students across the content areas and create learning environments that support the struggling reader by working in a coherent and interdependent system of planning and instruction (McPeak & Trygg, 2007).

Additionally, in the research conducted by Kamil et al. (2008) for the U.S. Department of Education, several factors contribute to what works in an instructional plan for the struggling adolescent reader while recent research also documents that while teachers know what best practices support a struggling adolescent reader they are not always regularly employed (Ciullo et al., 2016). Additional explicit strategies used to strengthen adolescent readers and close the achievement gap include students using targeted discussions to explore their ideas and challenge their comprehension within text. Students who are struggling readers become expert in their ability to closely listen and to regurgitate information that has either been shared with the teacher or from their peers. In order for their abilities to grow all students need to be engaged in the actual eyes on text reading and be an active part of the conversation not just a passive listener.

While students may present as being more efficient as they are able to tag on to the ideas of others, when pushed to read and comprehend independently they don't have the ability or the stamina. Several studies (McPeak & Trygg, 2007; Torgeson, Houston, Rismman, Decker, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Francis, & Rivera, 2007; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003) have identified few instructional strategies that encourage the closing of the achievement gap through targeted comprehension strategy instruction: balance of strategy and content, involvement through small group text related discussions and scaffolding, teaching students a number of reading strategies to use when comprehension breaks down, and teachers needing time for professional development. Adolescent readers needs become more complex, as the text students are expected to comprehend becomes more complex, as classes become more complex, and as the structure of schools becomes more complex students need additional strategies and direct instruction to access the content area (including the language arts content area) in a deep and meaningful way and to create relationships across multiple concepts within varied texts across various context (Kamil et al., 2008; Tovani, 2000). By creating thinking frames for students that are conceptual, and embedding targeted Tier 1 instructional strategies, increasing eyes on text time and opportunities for further Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention within an authentic setting, students are supported both in the core classroom and with discreet and explicit skill instruction that could lead to closing the achievement gap. The achievement gap, however, continues to become more complex with the growing bank of information students navigate as both students and adults continue to interact with text in different capacities as a result of the shift in technological advances from the late 20th and early 21st century (National Endowment of the Arts, 2007; Torgeson et al., 2007). While a magnitude of research shows that it is imperative for students to learn foundational literacy skills necessary to learn to read by the end of grade 3, the concept of

reading and reading further and deeply into complex academic text should continue to be a focus of all educators in both middle school and high school (Torgeson et al., 2007; RAND, 2002). The academic secondary school reader encounters several types of texts in several forms throughout their school day and will continue to be challenged to navigate dense text in the post secondary academic arena and in the work force (Torgeson et al., 2007). Students need time to practice the metacognitive strategies to "figure out and fix it" when comprehension starts to slip (King- Sears & Bowman- Kruhm, 2010, p. 35). While this is a practice that may be introduced in isolated reading intervention blocks, students may benefit further if they engage in immediate and authentic practice. This work of the core Ela classroom should engage students in high interest complex text and encourage the reading work to not live in isolated shortened or abbreviated texts. Students need to be given extended authentic learning opportunities to move through three levels of comprehension: the literal, the interpretive or inferential, and the critical or applied (King- Sears & Bowman- Kruhm, 2010). Through the team teaching model, teachers may plan direct, focused instruction that is followed through in authentic and engaging tasks that expand students' experiences beyond the limited engagement offered in isolated reading intervention programs. Research shows that students who struggle with reading have an attitude that reinforces their lack of willingness to engage in longer texts (McCray, Vaughn, & Neal, 2001). Research from Nell Duke et al., (2007) also indicates, that students who are engaged in authentic purposes around text are more likely to show growth (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). Additionally, the difficulty of text and students' perceptions that texts are just too hard has a direct negative effect on the adolescent reader; "matching student ability with text difficulty is crucial if educators are to reduce students' aversion to informational text" (Ho & Guthrie, 2013). The Ela classroom needs to provide opportunities for students to study both the structure and thinking

processes of narrative text and informational text comprehension, and within the team teaching instructional model, through concept based instructional units, students have the opportunity to be supported through both targeted instruction necessary to directly impact the engagement of the reader and the context to apply their learning impacting both motivation and the students' ability to sustain the intervention (Ho & Guthrie, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014).

Motivation and Engagement

Students need an instructional environment their reading needs addressed, but their belief in themselves as readers in supported as reader efficacy and motivation are highly important to the success or failure of the adolescent reader (Alverman, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Scammaca et al., 2007). In order for adolescents to be successful readers in the secondary setting, they must not only be able to read text, they must be literate in all types of text as their ability to navigate content area classes will depend on it (Alverman, 2002; Guthrie et al., 1997; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Ho & Guthrie, 2013; Tovani, 2000). Additionally, the traditional secondary setting may not support the structure necessary for students to work within classrooms that are designed to support the struggling adolescent which will impact not only their Ela class, but classes across the day as in the secondary setting, students are expected to garner critical information from texts that they read both in class and also independently (Allington, 2002; Roderick & Cambern, 1999). Students need to have both a positive attitude and feel that they can be successful in order for them to engage in meaningful learning, therefore focusing on both the reading behaviors that need to be strengthened and creating a social learning environment where students are encouraged to interact with text and with peers should be considered (Dieker & Little, 2005; Guthrie et al., 2013). Literacy spans beyond what we call "school literacy" (Alverman, 2002) and moves into what the digital age demands of all members- that we can

navigate multiple text types for multiple purposes and critique the information that is being presented to us in various forms. Adolescent readers also have to understand what the purpose is to their assigned tasks. When students are engaged in what Fisher and Ivey (2006) call " lifeless reading and writing tasks that bear no resemblance to the real world, we ensure their status as outsiders to the real literate communities" (p. 182). Learning to become a better reader does not involve students trying harder, it is about meeting the processing needs of secondary students and to provide students the tools necessary to navigate complex texts (Dieker & Little, 2005). Standards based instruction has changed the course of the English language arts classroom, as the emphasis is on the process of the reader and not just on the books being taught, moving away from whole class reading to finding multiple texts that students can read and access across varied readability levels. The team taught double Ela block addresses the needs of adolescent readers who benefit from additional time to work within authentic text and who have been identified as needing a reading intervention. Teachers of this class co-plan so both the Ela teacher and the reading teacher have mutually agreed upon goals for students and can plan methods to employ the team during class in order to share the teaching responsibilities. Teachers can confer with more students more regularly and guide book club discussions and complete small group work. Struggling adolescent readers need instruction from highly qualified teachers, and both the Ela teacher and the reading teacher have varied expertise. Without ongoing correspondence and collaboration between the Ela teacher and the reading teacher instructional strategies and priorities could be competitive and confusing for adolescents as isolated programs often have a unique set of practices that may or may not be easily generalizable to core classroom instruction.

Additionally, working on skills and strategies in an authentic environment supports transfer of skills immediately and within the context of content areas, as students are practicing

reading skills and strategies in an authentic and engaged environment that supports the bigger instruction of an Ela classroom. Studies by McPeak and Trygg (2007) present ways for secondary educators to close the achievement gap and deliver learning strategies to students in the core academic subjects that include multiple tiers of intervention that meet the needs of struggling readers. Further research from Graves et al. (2011) considers reading achievement is further impacted by what research calls the "Mathew Effect" asserting that students who read well read more while students who read below grade level read less "because reading programs make fewer demands on below- level students than on the above level students" (Graves et al., 2011, pp. 123-124). In programmed pull out reading interventions, the district in this research was using a blend of purchased reading programs that were not in any way connected or complementary to the work being done in the core academics. Additionally, students were engaged in reading texts in isolation and not tied to the work of their content area classes or the Ela classes. During the retrospective review the researcher completed a review of the Ela curriculum and found that the Ela curriculum was focused on a few core texts that were read by all students in every class, without an accounting for students' interests or reading ability so even students reading on grade level were not engaged in wide reading or volume reading. Research shows students who have the ability to choose texts that are of interest them and are at a level that students can read independently to build their reading stamina and cognitive reading processes supports a stronger reading comprehension (Allington, 2001; Guthrie et al., 2013). It is a complex yet necessary imperative that teachers find a balance of academic rigor, student autonomy and choice, and finding both narrative and informational texts that keep students motivated to read (Guthrie et al., 2013).

Team Teaching Concept (Co-Teaching)

Secondary English language arts classroom teachers are trained to be content area experts. Reading intervention teachers are taught to be reading strategy experts and diagnosticians. The work of English language arts teachers is contingent on students having the ability to read grade level text, yet many students continue to struggle with this concept. Classroom environments in the middle school are broken out across the day, forcing students to conceptualize different content areas with different teachers. Ideally, middle school teaming provides teachers with opportunity to plan across the day in efforts to support the student. Marilyn Friend (2008) defines co-teaching and team teaching as two different entities. Co-teaching presumes that there is a varied level of teacher expertise within the classroom. Team teaching is when two "general education" teachers work in the same class but the ratio of students is still the same. In this case study, the term team teaching is used due to the nature of the extended Ela block. Students in this class may be receiving additional support from special education, or may just be students identified as benefitting from additional time in Ela using agreed upon criteria based on benchmark data (NWEA). Both teachers in the team teaching model described in this action research are general educators, as defined by their certification. A reading teacher may work with students who have identified learning needs through an IEP, but may also work with students who have been recommended for additional reading support. Friend (2008) further identifies several components of a successful team teaching model: each teacher must have a shared philosophy; each teacher share characteristics that would support them being a good fit for team teaching; each teacher must be able to collaborate with a partner; there must be clear plans and procedures; and the teachers must have administrative support (Friend, 2008).

Within the team teaching configuration, research of McPeak and Trygg (2007) indicates that in order for students to be successful they must move beyond procedural work to being able to fluidly make meaning and in order to do that students need to " learn to integrate new information and skills with what they already know in a way that makes sense. Such scaffolding makes it easier and more likely that they utilize them at a later time, across varied environments" (p. 26). The reading work can't simply be additive, as a stand alone intervention. Students need to practice the work in an authentic setting therefore the "improvements resulting from the work done at both levels is more than the sum of the effects from each of the levels separately" (McPeak & Trygg, 2007, p. 26).

The size of a middle school and the competitive schedules often leaves little to no time for authentic collaboration with between teachers to specifically discuss the literacy needs of their students (Cramer & Nevin, 2006). Throughout the course of the day, dissimilar to the elementary one room or two room instructional model, middle school students travel from classroom to classroom across their day. Middle school teachers are dependent on what Routman (2014) refers to as "professional trust" amongst colleagues that as students travel across the day and across the system through the grades that teachers will continue to move students forward appropriately. There may be professional trust between the reading and Ela department, however, this may not correlate with comprehensive intervention plans as the teaching could be fragmented between the reading intervention and the core classroom instruction. As Torgeson et al. (2007) state it takes years of professional development for teachers to become skilled in teaching students to use multiple strategies to support their comprehension. In a typical middle school structure, often students are placed in isolated remedial reading classes or literacy intervention blocks that are not in coherence or compliment to the core classroom instruction,

creating another silo of practice that can't be capitalized on within the remainder of the school day thwarting another one of the recommendations that while a students need to learn a variety of comprehension strategies to support their reading throughout their day, there is an exhaustion when the brain needs to use compensatory skills to navigate which strategy to use and which jargon phrase to apply to the learning. Whether or not both teachers have similar expectations for student learning outcomes using universal data points, the collaboration is not typically represented. Instead of working in isolation through pull out remedial services, school leaders will need to continue to find ways in which to maximize teacher contact time and improve communication between core classroom teachers and remedial reading support staff through authentic and meaningful collaboration. The team taught model allows for both peer coaching and collaborative reflection both on the part of the Ela teacher and also the push in reading teacher (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Scammacca et al., 2007).

There are several levels of collaboration and the use of effective collaboration structures could impact the structure of how a team taught classroom is conducted. Reeves (2009) challenges leaders to recognize the difference between what Roland Barth (1990) calls, "congeniality and collegiality" (Reeves, 2009). Collegiality is the difficult work of authentic collaborative practices that shift our practice not just the comfort of getting along with colleagues and meeting as a PLC but instead it is a commitment to make positive changes that require practice and repeated practice to develop and hone collaborative skills (Reeves, 2009). Fullan (2005) goes on to call out the difference between collaboration and coblaboration; "the dark side of collaboration deserves a name of its own. Let's call it *coblaboration*. The aim is to collaborate, but the result is blab that does not really pool the minds around the table, going nowhere in any one of several ways, or all of them" (p. 48). In the team teaching configuration,

educators have the potential to build authentic collaborative practices including live feedback on teaching practices in the team taught classroom (Scammacca et al., 2007). Teachers who are team teaching can remove the former barriers of collaborative time, as the responsibility of the instruction is a shared practice. This concept of being active reflective practitioners within the team teaching structure changes the scope of professional learning, as teams who are teaching together may have ongoing professional growth opportunities within their team reflection as opposed to the formal concepts of the banking system etic professional learning model formally used to embed literacy skills within all content areas (Freire, 2005). The work of the district's transformation will include shifting the mindset of teachers from co-planning and data sharing as "just one more thing I have to do", or a fixed mindset, to an authentic form of professional development through authentic collaboration and team teaching and as a result increase a growth mindset approach that allows personal growth and change to be not an obstacle to the goal, but actually an outcome of the learning (Dweck, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Human capital and social capital are built through active collaboration and the sharing of goals and ideas that parties (team teachers) have more access to the information and also have the ability to gain knowledge through the expertise of their colleagues (Haergraves & Fullan, 2012).

The district studied in this research had employed and currently employs a co-teaching model where the classroom teacher (content area) worked in collaboration with special education. While this practice may support teachers working to build strategies on how to accommodate and modify for students, this may not be enough to support students who are reading below grade level or adolescents who are struggling readers but are not identified with an Individualized Educational Plan or IEP. Since the adoption of the CCSS (2010) as the Connecticut Core Standards, expectations for what students need to be able to do within text

have increased. Additionally, research proves over and over that reluctant readers avoid reading, and the opportunity for the achievement gap to widen is encouraged. Co-teaching has been the subject of multiple studies (Friend, 2008; Murdock, Finneran, & Theve, 2015; Reilly, 2015; Roe, 2010). Additionally, further exploring best practices to meet the needs of secondary school adolescent readers continues to be apparent as the studies are limited for middle school students and results that have been documented are mixed (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; King et al., 2012). Team teaching can be identified as two teachers who work together in a way that is beneficial to both the students in their class, but also beneficial to the team of teachers (Cramer & Nevin, 2006). Two teachers working in tandem give more face time to students, have the ability to collaborate together and to problem solve students' learning needs, and teachers can share their expertise of both reading intervention strategies and also the core classroom curricula (Murdock et al., 2015). Advantages of team teaching or co teaching include that collaboration works between teachers as two teachers are co-planning and co-delivering lessons and there is little lost instructional time, as if a student expresses a need the lesson can continue while the co teacher or team teacher can address the individual needs or confusion of the child. Additionally, there is a lack of loss of continuity, as it is a rare occurrence that more than one teacher would be absent on the same day- establishing a classroom practice that is rarely interrupted (Murdock et al., 2015). In a team taught classroom students have increased ongoing feedback from teachers both about the lessons being taught, and also two teachers focusing on redirecting and keeping them on task, noticing and encouraging students who are fake reading. Additionally, as the needs of adolescents emerge, there is always a colleague who is available to share the responsibility of meeting the needs of the individual while the other colleague can continue class. Struggling adolescent readers demand attention as they will often exhibit disruptive behavior as a method of

avoidance. Some teachers may mistake compliance for a successful classroom environment. If the struggling adolescent isn't acting up or causing a scene, then the rest of the class may continue with business as usual. This practice does not guarantee that the struggling adolescent readers' needs are being met as they are being left alone; compliance or conforming to the teacher's wanted behaviors does not guarantee that the student is engaged in meaningful targeted work (Roe, 2010). The work within the team taught class allows for meeting students' needs not only by examining final product, but also more about monitoring and adjusting instruction to address process. In elementary school the process of reading still gets the attention, as reading and writing are still a process that students must master (Roe, 2010; Morgan et al., 2013). The structures and schedules of secondary schools may deductively prompt teachers to focus on the product based instruction and lose focus on the processes needed to master the complex skills of English language arts. The isolation of the process and the focus on the product may promote a false positive, as isolated products may not correlate with stronger literacy practices as grading a product is a subjective teacher practice (Roe, 2010).

Many research studies (Fuchs et al., 2010; King et al., 2012; McPeak & Trygg 2007; RAND, 2002; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003) caution that secondary institutions should not simply adopt the RTI or intervention plan used in the elementary schools. King et al. (2012) point out that secondary leaders need to consider using other staff as additional support, in their research the researchers recommended that the speech and language pathologist be considered for additional support. Additionally, King et al. (2012) revealed that adolescents are past the point of prevention types of intervention and instead need to engage in problem solving models and encourage administrators to become "RTI pioneers" (p. 18). Research by Rotter (1966) as cited in Gambrell and Morrow (2015) indicated that teachers feel more effective over what is within

their immediate control. In a balanced literacy classroom, an Ela or reading teacher grapples between being in control and releasing control to students through varying degrees of involvement during a language arts lesson. “Depending on the goal of the literacy event, activity, or lesson, different levels of teacher and student input are appropriate and necessary” (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015, p. 51). When teachers are working in the team teaching push in intervention model, there is a higher rate of opportunity for teachers to release ownership to students within the team taught class and move through the gradual release model from direct instruction to independent practice. If students are taught in the isolated reading block they may find small measures of success in the small group setting, but not have the opportunity to apply the concepts to the core academic classes. The interventionist is being expected to deliver targeted intervention practices during a short block of time, they may never get to the independent practice component and never having the opportunity to bridge meaning across the separate classroom environments (Tovani, 2000). When working in an extended block, there is not only a time advantage of having extended face time with students, but there is also another professional to work with small groups. Additionally, Ela teacher may have a better understanding of the grade level expectations for student performance in both reading and writing and a better working knowledge of the curriculum. As the need for Ela to become a greater part of the instructional practices across content areas, than the need for sustained intervention within Ela will be critical to performance across all content areas (CCSS, 2010; Gambrell & Morrow, 2015; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). In order for students to make gains, research emphasizes the need for direct and explicit instruction in intensive intervention (Graves, Duesbery, Pyle, Brandon, & Mcintosh, 2011). If there is no correlation between direct instruction in intervention and generalized instruction in a core academic setting, the impact will decrease, but this work takes

collaboration between team members. “It is also important that present and emerging strategies be coupled with strategies to improve teacher receptivity to interventions, and to implementing strategies appropriately” (Mastropieri et al., 2003, p. 114)

Secondary teachers work somewhat in isolation in containers of content area thinking across the day. Teachers who teach in a team have a constant feedback loop with their colleagues as team teaching colleagues have less lonely work (Roe, 2010). Throughout the school day what was previously a privatized practice of either reading intervention or Ela instruction becomes an opportunity for feedback and reflection from another certified staff member in the room who has a vested interest in student achievement. Team teacher further provides additional calibration as through this practice two teachers are giving feedback to students, sharing the grading responsibilities, while having another set of professional eyes on student work to calibrate the quality of work and assignments. Co-teaching or team teaching is a forced relationship that may force a shift if the team is expected to thrive (Reilly, 2015).

Team teaching requires support from administration, but the team itself provides teachers ongoing professional support. The classroom environment created by a team of teachers is unique. Teachers need targeted professional learning opportunities around team teaching techniques and how team teaching can meet further the needs of their adolescent readers through explicit targeted instruction that can be generalized into the classroom practices. Additionally, administration needs to know what to look for when observing and giving feedback in a team taught classroom. The elements of an effectively run team taught classroom may look different than that of a traditional classroom (Murawski & Bernhardt, 2015). In order for team teaching to thrive, there needs to be a collaborative structure in place (Murawski & Bernhardt, 2015). Teachers also need to be adept at using the varied instructional strategies available to team

teachers, for example the most common include: one teach, one observe; one teach- one assist; teaming; station teaching; alternative teaching; parallel teaching (Friend, 2008; Murawski & Bernhardt, 2015). The team teaching observation loop is collaborative, so the supervisory component of team teaching can be seen through a codependent lens which may provide future research opportunities in order to create an alternative observation tool for administration (Murawski & Bernhardt, 2015).

Empirical studies have been conducted evaluating the effects of a traditional co-teaching model on the impacts of middle school students who have specified reading disabilities where the co-teaching model is comprised of a special education teacher and a content area teacher. Magiera and Zigmond's (2005) research consisted across three school districts with varied class sizes across four observations. The middle school's examined did not have consistent planning time, did not have training before or during the co-teaching examined cycles, and teachers had varying experience from first year teachers to teachers had five or more years' experience. The researchers reiterate that the teachers examined had limited or no co-planning time and operated "on the fly" (p. 81). Magiera and Zigmond (2005) stated that while students did receive more individual instructional interactions when there was a co-teacher in the room as opposed when the general education teacher was working in isolation. They further explain that while students got more attention overall, students with disabilities received less attention from the general education teacher. Whole class instruction was the predominant delivery model. Magiera and Zigmond (2005) indicated that the result of this research has limited generalizability to the co-taught classes under ideal conditions, instead the design of the research was to research conditions that typically appear in classes that are co-taught between a special education teacher and regular education teacher (p. 83). Struggling adolescent readers need additional time with

eyes on text and have more opportunities to discuss what they have read with peers. Additionally, struggling adolescent readers need focused instruction in small groups and as individuals from the teachers who are most qualified to do this work in order to address their specified reading deficiencies. In order for team teaching to be successful, the model must not fall in what is Magiera and Zigmond (2005) refer to as "routine conditions" (p. 84). Co-teaching traditionally consists of a special education teacher and a regular education teacher. In a co-teaching model, teachers work together to "blend their expertise, share materials, and develop common instructional goals" (Conderman, 2011, p. 24). In this research, team teaching differs from co-teaching, as team teaching consists of two teachers who have expertise in English language arts or reading. Special education teachers also support these teams and collaborate on goals and objectives of students and assist in working in small groups, however the addition of the reading teacher serves as a bridge between the Ela teacher and the struggling adolescent reader as the reading teacher has expertise on the reading process.

Ideally teachers will engage in levels of "best practice" and "next practice" where teachers have "the freedom, space and resources to create next practice (innovative approaches that often begin with teachers themselves and that will sometimes turn out to be best practices of the future)…professional capital is about communities of teachers using best and next practices together" (Haergraves & Fullan, 2012, p. 51). The team teachers involved in the pilot and the action research will have space, time, and the collaborative partner necessary to grow in their individual and group practices. The implementation of the team teachers may support the implantation of the new Ela curricular units and shifts of instruction within the Ela classes. New practices are sustained when encouraged by a colleague or team teacher (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

Conclusion

Evidence from a wide range of professional texts and empirically based documents contribute to this review. The researcher believes that the growing needs of adolescent readers deems an alternative approach to instruction a viable and innovative endeavor. In addition, the growing needs of professional learning including ongoing support and coaching of teachers becomes an additional potential opportunity through the team teaching approach. School and district leadership will need to continue to find innovative ways to support teachers' growing their efficacy in a world that is constantly changing under their feet and policies continue to shift at the district, state, and national educational reform level. Secondary school reforms continue to place emphasis on high stakes testing, specifically Smarter Balanced Assessments and also PSAT and SAT data as indicators of college and career readiness. Educational leaders need to continue to challenge the status quo and move beyond technical complications to build better models of intervention for our students who need instructional support and practice in the area of literacy. In the twenty first century, adult learners' needs are also evolving and what may have felt like relevant learning ten years ago may no longer satisfy the forward thinking teacher. Collectively administration and teachers need to continue to embrace innovative and collaborative methods for increasing student achievement especially in the area of reading as the needs of struggling adolescents are highly complex. "Change does not lead to an end point, but rather, it places us on a path toward new beginnings and greater possibilities" (Hord & Roussing, 2013).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

This action research study consisted of two phases of research. Phase I included a retrospective case study and the design and implementation of pilot year of a team teaching intervention approach. In Phase I the researcher defined the action research, completed a historical retrospective review and analysis, determined what additional information should be retrospectively gathered and documented, examined and reviewed the literature on the needs and motivations of adolescent readers and the team- teaching (co-teaching) model. The researcher introduced the concept of the pilot of the team taught push in intervention model to be piloted in six classes within the district. The pilot team teachers taught extended Ela classes as the first iteration of the action research. In Phase II the researcher- administrator gathered information from pilot teachers and administration on the perceptions of the pilot years, potential benefits and potential areas to improve and created a tiered professional learning intervention that consisted of five cycles. The researcher administrator collected multiple forms of data including anonymous surveys from team teachers who participated in the pilot of the push in team taught Ela class (Appendix A), conducted and transcribed semi-structured interviews with building administration on their perceptions of the team taught push in intervention model (Appendix B), and the researcher administrator's reflections and notes from all phases of Phase I of the action research. The researcher used this data in order to create the multi-phase professional learning cycles for both teachers who were working in the team taught configuration and also sessions that addressed needs of the entire Ela department. The team teachers' professional learning sessions were a specialized targeted extension of the work done with the entire Ela department that was designed with the specific learning needs of the team teachers as its basis.

Research Design

This two phase action research study started with the a retrospective exploration of how English language arts teachers and reading teachers can best meet the needs of adolescent readers through both push in intervention practices and core instructional practices in grades seven and eight. Phase I included a retrospective case study analysis and the development of a pilot that included team teaching. The Phase I pilot was analyzed and the researcher-administrator developed a professional learning intervention. The researcher-administrator chose methods that best supported the purpose of her research as an emic participant. The researcher- administrator explored how to improve the work of both English language arts teachers and reading teachers through a team taught model while also supporting teachers through the changing approach to middle school English language arts instruction. This action research study may inform English language arts practices in the secondary setting as the team teaching concept is nontraditional and challenges traditional scheduling practices and allows for innovation in the secondary setting (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). As Greene (2007) states, "social inquiry begins with a substantive intention or purpose or a substantive set of questions" (p. 97). The researcher-administrator chose to conduct an action research study within her own school district that could directly impact praxis in local conditions (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Tuckman & Harper, 2012). The researcher-administrator included an ethnographic reflection of the research process to strengthen her own praxis at the end of Phase II. The researcher- administrator did not use direct quotes from either teachers or administration during this research in order to maintain the dependability and of the research results due to the researcher- administrator's positionality in the district. All data gathered was aggregated and coded for themes and generalizations which is further detailed in Chapter 4.

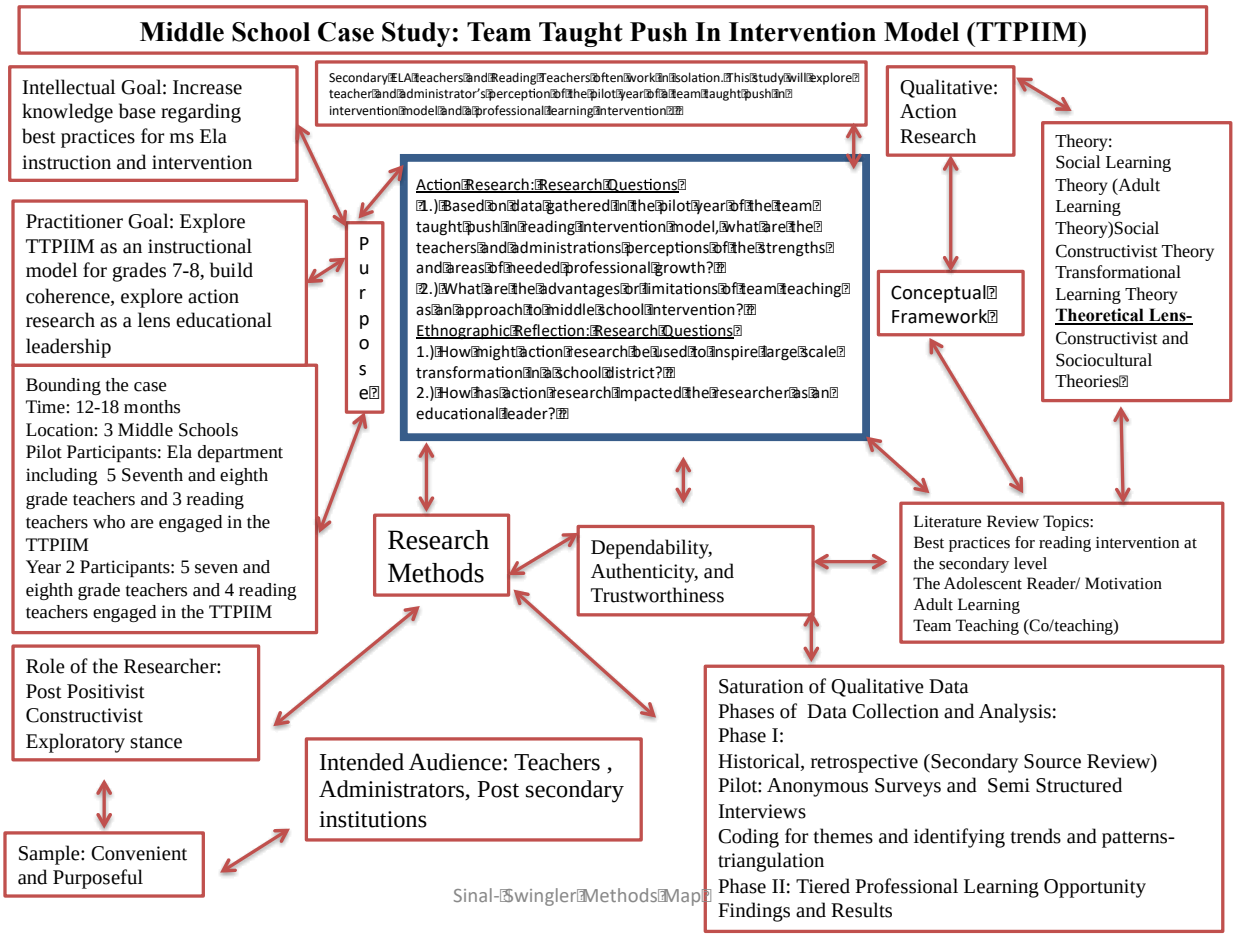

Figure 3.1: *Researcher's Methods Map*

Summary of Findings: Phase I Retrospective Review and Pilot Year Overview

Phase I Summary

Phase I of the action research included a retrospective case study of three middle schools in one school district reviewing past practices of reading intervention in grades seven and eight. The researcher reviewed secondary sources from before the pilot year of the team taught push in model to create a storyline for the retrospective case study and to document the thinking that shifted the district toward the team taught push in intervention model in grades seven and eight. Additionally, the researcher wanted to reach saturation in Phase I or "a state the researcher makes the subjective determination that new data will not provide any new information or

insights for the developing categories: (Creswell, 2012, p. 627). The secondary source review generated key findings about teaching and learning in the middle school as reflected in curriculum maps and program descriptions used during reading interventions.

The district studied has approximately six thousand students in its k-12 school configuration. The three middle schools studied in this case study are a grade 6-8 configuration. The grades studied in this case study are grade seven and grade eight. The researcher explored multiple options of how to best move the work of the middle school Ela and reading department. Through varied meetings, notes, and professional discussions there was evidence of a disconnect between the work of the reading interventions and the work of the Ela core academic areas. Schools in this district were using a traditional pull out intervention system to deliver reading instruction using varied programs and varied implementation methods. The pull out intervention took place during the social studies class period; students in reading did not attend social studies classes for varied periods of time including up to an entire school year. When students were considered successful they returned to the social studies classes. The pull out intervention reading class' intended plan was to have students be in the reading intervention for a short period of time, as the goal was to get them back to core social studies classroom.

Additionally, Ela classroom instruction was strongly book title centered, one core book for all students to read with activities that accompanied the book without a lot of student choice. Students read between three and five books a year in Ela classes with an emphasis on a few core texts, several short stories, and some evidence of independent reading books that were accompanied with book talks. A review of past curriculum and pacing guides identified very few title choices for wide range reading across level or genre or student choice which impacts adolescent reader's motivation (Ho & Guthrie, 2013). Additionally, there was a recent emphasis

placed on short story reading as teachers had attended professional development on short story shared inquiry. There was little evidence of ongoing working with informational text or books clubs/ literature circles. The Common Core State standards place a high emphasis on a variety of texts, genres, and writing types that students need to master to be college and career ready (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012; CCSS, 2010).

Reading teams identified varied successes through the pull out reading intervention model including a positive emphasis that students were exited from the intervention block and returned to social studies. Students who returned to the social studies block would sometimes be referred back to reading support for a variety of teacher identified reasons. Other students who had been identified as needing reading support stayed in the reading groups as they were unable to meet the exit criteria of return. Each building had criteria of which students were eligible for pull out services however the practices in each school were not consistent. Overall, some students showed growth according to assessments given in the pull out reading intervention, but there was a lack of evidence that these gains in intervention transferred to core academic periods. There was limited contact between the reading teacher and the English language arts teacher. A secondary source review of previous curriculum and pacing guides revealed that during English language arts students were working in texts as a whole class without options to read books of high interest or at varied levels. Students were assigned to read "core texts" during the school year that were limited in variety of type or reading level. Students who were receiving reading support were also working in identified core texts during the English language arts block with some support from the teacher, but were not offered a large variety of texts to choose from. Students would read a few texts for long period of times in their core English language arts block, as the emphasis was placed on teaching the novel and completing activities associated

with the novel. Students in the former pull out intervention block may be working with texts on an independent reading level or smaller chunked texts during the reading intervention period but students were not working with grade level texts during the intervention block on a regular basis, while teachers did indicate they made a solid attempt to bring in social studies topics. The concept of grade level text was determined by the program assessments being used at that grade level. The district recently had shifted the model of reading interventionists. Formerly each middle school had two reading teachers who were working with students in the pull out intervention block, but had recently moved one reading teacher to take the role of a literacy coach to support social studies teachers to embed best practices in reading informational text within social studies classes. This decision reduced the reading team to one person to service the needs of all students across the three grade levels.

The schedule challenged teachers to give students additional time practicing reading text independently and to receive additional targeted instruction as part of the core Ela class. Struggling readers need additional time to practice reading skills and be supported with targeted intervention in reading skills and strategies. Allington (2013) states that students who struggle with reading need more practice- not less when it comes to having their eyes on text, not to be confused with fake reading, but engaged reading. Allington (2013) goes on to support that schools need the most qualified teachers working with struggling readers. In many secondary settings, including the three schools studied in the pilot, students leave a core academic class to attend their pull out reading intervention. Teachers in core academics may or may not know what specific skills students were working on in reading intervention and may or may not carry that work over into the content area. While coaches were employed to work in the content area, a culture of coaching had not been established prior to the deployment of the coaches causing

some reticence of some faculty. Ela and reading teachers may have some opportunity to collaborate or even share student goals, but the practice may not be in sync or consistent. The team teaching model push in intervention model was piloted to make movement towards a more aligned approach to meeting the needs of adolescent readers and to provide teachers ongoing opportunities to align their goals for student learning and to make a concerted effort in meeting the needs of the adolescents around mutually agreed upon goals. Also, within the push in team teaching approach, students were expected to read texts that are taught as part of the core Ela curriculum which includes elements of student choice and literature circles. Students also returned to social studies classes full time and were no longer pulled from that class. Teacher teams were created at each middle school to co-teach, or "team teach" both Ela and reading in an extended double reading block as the pilot. The pilot was implemented to provide students with a learning environment that was co-constructed with both the goals of reading intervention and the shifted expectations of the Ela classroom. The researcher considered what the push in team teaching pilot could achieve and where the pilot fit into a comprehensive intervention plan to meet the needs of adolescents (Wepner et al., 2014). The pilot was conducted while the English language arts department was shifting the scope of the curriculum, identifying the materials necessary to make the changes, assuring alignment to the school and district goals, and securing necessary human capital while further defining the role of the literacy coach within all content area classes.

From the work of the retrospective case study at the beginning of Phase I, several action steps were taken to improve the assessment and instruction approach to teaching English language arts and reading. The curriculum of the English language arts was rewritten to a concept based and genre based approach to instruction. The instructional model shifted from

whole class novel reading to the use of anchor texts, mentor texts, and book club books. Students were encouraged to choose books of high interest and read independently. The middle school implemented common district performance tasks three times a year and implemented a new reading assessment system (Benchmark Assessment System) to better identify students who may be reading below grade level and to provide guidance for teachers on the specific instructional needs of struggling readers. Data was collected at the end of the pilot which signifies the beginning of Phase II.

Procedures

Phase 1: Retrospective Review

For Phase I the researcher completed a retrospective analysis. The researcher examined the literature on best instructional practices for adolescents, the theory behind intervention models and team teaching (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 *Initial Themes Generated from the Literature*

Themes from the literature	References
Adolescent readers need to engage in authentic learning activities to make connections and to strengthen their skills. Relevance matters.	Gambrell, Malloy, Marinak, Mazzoni (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Griffo, Madda, Pearson, & Raphael as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Guthrie (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Fisher & Frey (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Roe (2010)
Motivation and engagement are two different concepts and both can be difficult for adolescent readers. Motivation is not just entertainment provided by a teacher. Engagement is not behavioral compliance.	Griffo, Madda, Pearson, & Raphael as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Guthrie (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); McPeak et al. (2007); Roe (2010);
Scaffolded instruction matters for students who need reading support across their entire school day. Gradual release of responsibility must include students engaging in authentic practice across content areas.	Gambrell, Malloy, Marinak, & Mazzoni (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Fisher & Frey (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Almasi & Hart (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Duke & Martin (2105) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015);

	King- Sears et al. (2010); Biancarosa & Snow (2006);
Adolescent readers thrive in a learning environment that is designed to meet their learning needs including time to socialize around reading, and collaborate and communicate their ideas. Students need to engage in wide reading across the academic day in high quality texts. Process should not overshadow product.	Griffo, Madda, Pearson, & Raphael as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Guthrie (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Guthrie (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Almasi & Hart (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Duke & Martin (2105) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Roe (2010)
Varied assessment practices matter for adolescent readers	Risko & Dalhouse (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Ciullo et al. (2016)
Adolescent readers are more complex. Students benefit from targeted intervention from skilled practitioners and direct instruction on strategies, skills, and concepts associated with disciplinary literacy. Literacy is a skill and a tool.	King- Sears et al. (2010); McPeak et al. (2007); Griffo, Madda, Pearson, & Raphael as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Almasi & Hart (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Duke & Martin (2105) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Mastropieri et al., (2003); Biancarosa & Snow (2006); Morgan et al., (2013)
Adolescent readers are motivated by having choice, feeling efficacious as readers and writers, working on poignant topics, and working with real materials	Gambrell, Malloy, Marinak, & Mazzoni (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Risko & Dalhouse(2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Roberts et al., (2008); Biancarosa & Snow (2006); Ho &Guthrie (2013); Klauda & Guthrie, (2015); Guthrie & Klauda, & Ho, (2013); Guthrie et al., (1997)
There is a dearth of research on secondary school RTI processes; further research is required on middle school best instructional practices for struggling readers. Secondary school structures are complex.	McPeak et al., (2007); Ciullo et al. (2106); Snow & Biancarosa (2003); Mastropieri et al., (2003); Solis et al. (2014); Roberts et al., (2008)
There needs to be systems that capitalize on the expertise in both content areas and reading strategies and skills through a coordinated and complementary instructional design. Programs are not always the answer. Additionally, not all content area teachers are well equipped to recognize and target reading weaknesses. English language arts is a content area. All	Griffo, Madda, Pearson, & Raphael as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Risko & Dalhouse(2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Fisher & Frey (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Duke & Martin (2105) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); King- Sears et al., (2010); Snow & Biancarosa (2003); Mastropieri et al., (2003); Roberts et

educators need to have high expectations for students in their classes.	al., (2008); Biancarosa & Snow (2006);
Professional development needs are not one size fits all and there is research that supports multiple methods of professional development.	Walpole & McKenna (2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Snow & Biancarosa (2003); Mastropieri et al., (2003); Cramer & Nevin, (2006); Biancarosa & Snow (2006); Joyce & Showers (2002)
Students need additional time to work on complex concepts and learn within a larger context. A process should determine placement and instructional approach, materials, additional progress monitoring.	McPeak et al. (2007); Risko & Dalhouse(2015) as cited in Gambrell & Morrow (2015); Mastropieri et al., (2003); Solis et al. (2014); Roberts et al., (2008)

In Phase I the researcher – administrator co-constructed and implemented a team taught push in intervention model in three grade seven classes and three grade eight classrooms to increase students work and exposure to high level, high interest texts with elements of choice, to encourage teacher collaboration and cohesion, and to provide additional supports and time to students who needed additional opportunities to engage in an authentic environment that also supported their individual learning needs within an Ela curricular context. Phase I data was used to design and implement Phase II. In Phase II the researcher used the data collected from the pilot study to inform the construction of the professional learning intervention, which was a professional learning series. Data was also collected during the professional learning cycles; teachers were asked to complete three feedback forms (Appendix D), pre- surveys, post surveys, and an additional follow up survey asking for further reflection (Figure 3.2).

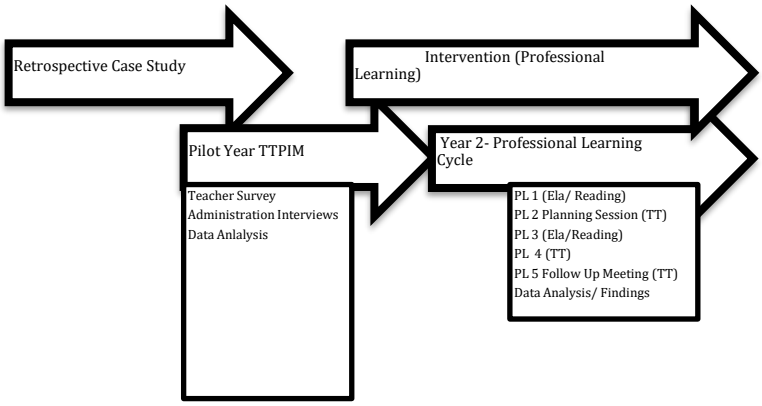

Figure 3.2: *Researcher's Action Research Sequence*

Phase II Pilot Year Analysis and Professional Learning Intervention

Phase II of research included the design and implementation of a professional development intervention for teachers in the team teaching model. Each component of the professional learning was designed to be complementary and coordinated. Two sessions were designed for the entire Ela and reading department. The researcher designed the intervention as a result from data gathered from both the administrative interviews and from the team teacher surveys as it was evident that all teachers could benefit from learning around data driven instructional planning and about delivering targeted small group interventions within Ela classes.

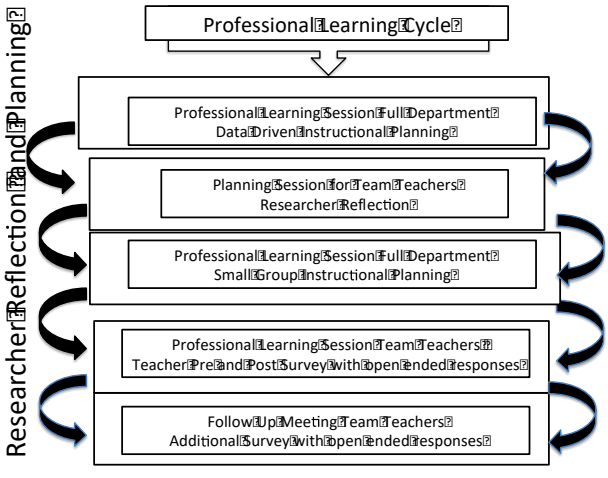

Figure 3.3: *Researcher's Professional Learning Cycle Design*

The researcher- administrator created an intervention plan in Phase II that focused on the themes presented in the data from the pilot year of the push in team teaching model. The researcher- administrator created professional learning sessions for both the entire Ela department and the team teachers who were involved in the pilot. The researcher developed and delivered two full department professional learning sessions (Professional Learning Session 1 and Professional Learning Session 3). The researcher changed the original intent to deliver professional learning only for team teachers as data from administration interviews that all teachers could benefit further from professional learning on data driven planning and instruction and also on differentiated learning. The researcher created three additional professional learning opportunities for team teachers that were iterations of the whole group learning but further targeted to meet the specific professional learning needs of the team teachers (Professional Learning Sessions 2, Professional Learning Session 4, and Professional Learning Session 5) (See Figure 3.4).

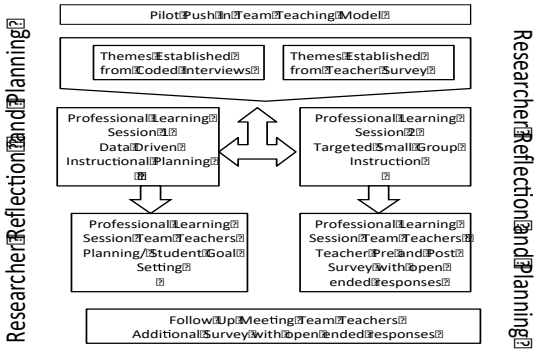

Figure 3.4 *Researcher's Phase II Map*

The professional learning intervention was comprised of five professional learning sessions with teachers, three sessions specific to the team teachers with two additional

professional learning sessions offered to all teachers in the Ela and reading department. The researcher planned an initial full department professional learning session for members of the Ela and reading department with ideas summarized with findings from case study and pilot year data with a concentration on the themes coded from the administrative interviews. Informal feedback was gathered from the initial professional learning with the entire English language arts department and the researcher took field notes during and after the professional learning session. As a result the researcher planned another full department professional learning session for all Ela teachers and reading teachers. The researcher also gathered ongoing informal feedback from teachers and the researcher took field notes during and after the professional learning session. In companion to the full department professional learning session, the researcher designed three additional professional learning sessions for the team teachers that included: a team planning session conducted between the two full department professional learning days, a focused day of professional learning on aspects of team teaching that included a collaborative planning session, and a team teacher follow up meeting to get feedback and measure implementation of the team teaching instruction strategies that had been modeled. Team teachers from the pilot phase of the study and current team teachers participated.

The researcher designed and delivered a tiered intervention (professional learning experiences) to team teachers. The researcher considered the feedback from the teacher surveys and the administrator interviews to determine the plan of the intervention and as a result it was determined that five professional learning sessions would be delivered to teachers. Two sessions of professional development were planned for the entire English language arts department that included the team teachers involved in the pilot. The topics of the professional learning for the first session included a data driven planning tool to help teachers target instruction using data

from universal screening assessments. The second professional learning session targeted how teachers could create targeted goals for students working within small intervention groups within the core Ela class. The researcher gathered anecdotal feedback and reflected on both professional learning session and then created an extension of the intervention that was designed for specifically for team teachers. The team teaching learning goals of the professional learning included: team teaching roles and responsibilities, team teaching instructional methods that encouraged the transfer and generalizability of strategies, skills, and concepts. Professional learning opportunities across all phases of the intervention also focused on strengthening the professional relationships within the English language arts and reading department. The professional learning intervention cycle continued with one follow up meeting with team teachers. Feedback was collected in each of the full department professional learning sessions and the team teaching professional learning day and follow up session.

The intervention was designed to strengthen the instructional approaches used in team teaching intervention model. The improvements were based on results from Phase I and theories associated with best practices for adolescent readers (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015; Tovani, 2000; Kamil et al., 2008; Biancorosa & Snow, 2006), co- teaching models (Friend, 2008) and transformative learning and professional development (Mezirow et al., 2009; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Guskey, 1986; Dufour, 2004; Taylor & Collins, 2003).

The researcher used the knowledge on adult learning and transformative theory and considered information collected from building administration in order to build the intervention. The researcher concentrated on both the process and priorities of adult learners as well as the knowledge about team teaching when designing the intervention. The researcher studied the varied data and reflected on anecdotal notes to determine if there are relationships between the

collected information and to create key learning targets. The researcher determined if the learning targets would be solely beneficial for the team teachers or if the entire department may benefit. The goal of the professional learning sessions was to increase team teachers' awareness of key factors within their immediate control and planning practices: the team teaching instructional approaches and a deeper look at the components of an Ela concept based unit of study and opportunities to target specific learning skills within instruction (Erickson, 2002; Erickson, 2007; Erickson & Lanning, 2014; Lanning, 2013). In order to meet the needs of team teachers, the researcher planned for a tiered professional development cycle that was directly connected to the work of the case study and pilot year data results. The researcher worked on a continuous cycle of revision and reflection in order to determine the needs of teachers in the Ela department and the specific needs of the teachers within the team taught classes. As action research is a process that "encourages teachers, counselors, and administrators to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches" (Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 417), the work in ongoing, reflective and iterative. The researcher administrator defined the sequencing of the retrospective case study and the intervention of professional development (see Figure 3.4).

High quality professional development experiences have to be designed in ways that sustains the adult learning as their impact does not always measure long term, as often within a professional learning opportunity the learning may or may not return to the classroom instructional model (Guskey, 1986; Joyce & Showers, 2002). The researcher wanted to highlight how the team teaching push in intervention model may foster additional instructional practices for both the reading teacher and the Ela teacher within core instruction.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher-administrator in this study was emic and etic as the researcher is an administrator in the district where the study is being conducted. The researcher considered her positionality in the research site (Herr & Anderson, 2015). In order to maintain integrity of the study and minimize bias based on the researcher's position in the district, all observations and analysis was considered secondary, all identifying information was redacted. The researcher took extensive steps to maintain the dependability of the teachers' responses and the positionality of the researcher is noted throughout this research. The strength of qualitative case study is in the rich and thick descriptions of the culture in which the researcher is both an emic and an etic contributor. The researcher employed a post positivist etic outsider stance when collecting and analyzing the anonymous survey instruments and an etic stance when co-constructing with participants the meaning of the interview data. The researcher did not work in the immediate proximity to any of the participants and used the research to funnel information gathered from the field to a system level to inform the work at both the district and the building level and worked to "bracket" personal bias during the interview and coding process (Creswell, 2012). While observing classrooms is part of the researcher's position within the district, formal observations were not included in this research. Data gathered from building level administration was used to inform Phase II of the research to strengthen the dependability of Phase II. In order to protect the participants, all information from teachers was collected anonymously as the planning practices and instructional methods employed by the teachers were a part of the survey, as the teaming's overall effectiveness could be impacted by a concept called "the zones of teacher enactment" (Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez- Flores, & Scribner, 2003). Creswell gives researchers a call to action regarding paradigmatic self-awareness as "individuals preparing a

research proposal or plan make explicit the larger philosophical ideas they espouse" (Creswell, 2009, p. 5). This study allowed the researcher-administrator to grow her own pedagogy, andragogy and leadership within the district that is being studied through an ethnographic reflection in the final analysis.

The researcher-administrator completed this action research study within her district with the intention of making a "holistic change" to the approaches of curriculum, instruction, and assessment used to support readers in middle schools (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010). Holistic change is identified as the efforts to shift multiple aspects within an organization including context of the project within the whole district and within schools, the relationships between team teachers and the relationships between the content of the action research in accordance to the priorities within each building, and to measure the outcomes of the research that is in action not just about action, as the research within action research often must be concurrent with the sequence of events within the research (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010, p. 4). The researcher was also aware that several factors must be considered when making substantial changes within an organization. Data from pilot teacher surveys and administrative interviews indicate that administration and teachers within the district are committed to improving student achievement and strengthening students' ability to read and write. The researcher also prioritized long term sustained change as an outcome of the action research work (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010). Action research is a continuous process, however, in the efforts of completing the dissertation, the researcher reported a series of five professional learning opportunities that were sequenced as a result of the teacher and administrator feedback from Phase I of the pilot. Action research at a system level is highly complex, as systems and organizations are complex but the goals remain connected to the daily operations of an organization as there must be a plan to motivate the

change, implement action steps to make the change, and build supports that support the change to sustain (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010; Lapan et al., 2012). The researcher is vested in the success of the students however is aware of the importance within system level traditional action research in "liberating your (her) self from subjectivity in order to meet the intellectual requirements of the research tradition (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010, p. 104).

The Researcher's Worldview

The researcher's worldview is pragmatic as the researcher's role is a district administrator where the action research study was conducted. This worldview is supported by the proximity of the researcher to the participants and the opportunity to reflect on her own experiences within the district as a leader. The researcher also takes the role of a constructivist as throughout the action research process, information and action is co- constructed across the researcher and participants in the participatory action research (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010). Additionally, when analyzing the data and coding the data for themes, the researcher takes the role of a post positivist, as the researcher – administrator took an objective stance when reading and coding the data and worked with another administrator in the district to member check the coding of themes. Additionally, the researcher takes on a pragmatic role, as within action research, participants are working toward a common goal of improved conditions within an organization.

Table 3.2 : *Researcher's Worldview Matrix (Christ, 2013)*

Researcher's Worldview	Post Positivist	Pragmatist	Constructivist
Ontology: (Reality)	From an objective stance, the researcher-administrator collected anonymous feedback from teachers at the end of the pilot and	The researcher and the participants seek to identify and sustain best practices for all students. The researcher-administrator is aware that all instructional approaches in both core	The constructivist's paradigm on ontology is both independently constructed and co-constructed by working within the research and with the participants. Professional learning in the intervention phase was

	during the professional learning cycle. The researcher observed teacher discussions around core instructional shifts in Ela and reading both in and out of the team teaching push in intervention model	instruction and in intervention practices are open for further consideration and change may be necessary and the focus in on what will work best for students who need further support	generated based on identified needs of both teachers and administration The reality becomes more blended as new learning occurs and as the changes made as part of the research have potential to stay as practices within the instructional block (revised curriculum processes, intervention practices, placement protocols, etc.). The constructivist believes that the new learning is necessary to uncover tacit and secondary information that may be valuable to the research and additional opportunities to extend the research. Within action research the researcher-administrator is open to new findings as they appear within the research Through ongoing professional learning and working in collaboration of teachers, the team teaching push in intervention model and the core instructional model continues to shift in response to the student success
Epistemology: (Knowledge)	The researcher-administrator used a post positivist approach when coding and analyzing the	Etic/ Emic The researcher-administrator needed to gather information in order to determine next steps of work.	The constructivist researcher creates new learning and new knowledge throughout the research process, while having a strong

	feedback and transcriptions from all phases of the research	The case study provided a deep review of intervention practices and core instructional practices and gave the researcher-administrator the necessary information to best determine the focus of the professional learning intervention.	background in the content area of language arts thereby making the researcher a local expert. Findings are co-created and subjective as the researcher creates the intervention of professional learning based on identified needs and professional reflection and observations collected during Phase I and during Phase II.
Axiology: (Values)	The researcher-administrator redacted all names and looked at either anonymous or aggregate feedback	Researcher and participants value high quality instruction and high quality intervention for all students including students who need reading intervention and support in core instruction. The researcher checked her own planning with both participants within the study and also with experts who were not in the study	The researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that the work of qualitative research is co-constructed between participants and the researcher The constructivist is aware of her own biases and values as she is researcher- administrator in the district she is conducting the study. Her bias includes her emic leadership position and work completed in the shifts in curriculum and instructional practices

Bounding the Case

The research was conducted in three schools in one district in grades seven and eight. Two main components were used to create a sampling design. The researcher determines how the participants will be selected, known as the "sampling scheme". The researcher must then decide on the number of participants, known as the "sample size" (Collins, 2010, p. 354). This

study was conducted in one school district over eighteen months team teachers who used the push in team teaching instructional model in grades seven and eight. The pilot phase teams existed in all three middle schools, designated as School A, School B, School C all had one or two teacher teams that participated in Phase II. The pilot phase team teaching partnerships consisted of six possible combinations of the English language arts teachers and the reading teacher teams. The participants are a convenience sample of English language arts teachers and reading teachers. The site of the study is one district with three middle schools. Participants are bounded to one district across the three middle schools, but individual teachers may work at two separate schools as split personnel within the district.

Sampling Design

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) explains sampling as "determining the location or site for the research, the participants who will provide data in the study and how they will be sampled, the number of participants" and "the recruitment of participants" (p. 172). As stated in Collins (2010) by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) in order to create a sampling design researchers must decide on how the participants will be selected, known as the "sampling scheme", then the researcher must decide on the number of participants, known as the "sample size"(Collins, 2010, p. 354). Sampling designs also include specifying a "sampling frame" or "target population" (Creswell, 2012). The researcher reflected on which types of sampling techniques would provide that best data. The sampling design was a convenient sample as the sample must be linked to the type of study being completed. In qualitative studies a researcher may use a "small, purposefully selected samples aiming for in-depth understanding" (Greene, 2007, p. 149). In qualitative research the researcher should "identify our purposes and sites on purposeful sampling, based on

places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012, p. 205) as purposeful sampling applies to both "people and sites" (Creswell, 2012, p. 205). The researcher's sampling strategy would be contingent on what kind of data she is trying to collect.

Participants and Location

For this study the researcher selected the teams of teachers from three middle schools in one suburban school district. Teachers selected were either English language arts teachers or reading teachers making the sample both a convenient sample and a purposive sample (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). All participants have varying levels of experience ranging from a third year teacher to an experienced teacher with almost twenty years' experience. The district has approximately 7,000 students enrolled across the elementary, middle and high schools. The sample size of teachers shifted between the implementation of the team taught push in model pilot and the second year of implementation of the team taught model when the professional learning intervention was planned and delivered as two teachers either left the district or were on extended leave. Additionally, one reading teacher was replaced and another reading teacher was added and shared between two of the three schools in the study. Administration remained static during both the pilot year of the push in team teaching model and during the second year of implementation when the professional learning cycle was delivered.

Data Collection

The researcher used a plan for collecting and organizing data as the organization of data is paramount to the success of the analysis. Researchers collect data from multiple sources when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2009). Multiple points of view were gathered to better represent the phenomenon being studied. Teachers from the pilot of the team teaching push in intervention model were given an electronic survey through an

anonymous platform at the end of the pilot year (Appendix A). The survey was sent to seven teachers and out of the seven teachers who received the survey, five teachers responded. Six school administrators were interviewed using semi structured interview questions (Appendix B). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. IRB approval was obtained to conduct the study and gather data from teachers and administration. All identifying information was redacted during data collection and teacher responses were aggregated. All school data was analyzed using codes for the identities of the school (School A, School B, and School C). Direct quotes were not used from either the teacher feedback or from the administrative interviews as the researcher is an administrator in the district and is aware of her positionality.

Phase I: Retrospective Review and Data Collection

The researcher collected varied data from multiple sources during Phase 1 in order to create a thick description of the district and to identify needs within the district. During Phase I secondary source data included a retrospective review of reading intervention practices within the district, a review of meeting notes and agendas leading up to the implementation of the pilot, a review of curriculum and support documents, and reviewing the notes of the work leading to the pilot of the team taught instructional model.

Phase II Pilot Year Data Collection

The researcher- administrator gathered thick description of the perceptions of the team taught push in teaching model after the implementation of the pilot. The researcher gathered data based on teacher and administration's perceptions of the first year of the push in team teaching intervention model. Data were gathered through the pilot teacher survey and administrative interviews. English Language Arts and reading teachers who participated in the pilot year were given an anonymous survey through an electronic platform with open-ended questions on the

team teaching push in model (Appendix A). The survey was given to teachers in order to gain their perspectives of the push in team teaching model in its pilot year and to gather additional information on the teachers' use of team teaching instructional strategies, fears and concerns about the team teaching model, and changes that teachers would like to see implemented after the pilot year. The survey was used to determine several factors about the teachers' experiences within the pilot year of the team taught push in model. The survey asked pilot year teachers to describe their perceptions on the purpose of the push in team teaching double block. Additionally, teachers were asked if they had any concerns prior to starting team teaching. The survey asked teachers to identify which team based instructional strategies their teams used most frequently and how reading interventions were delivered in the team teaching model. Teams were asked about planning practices around the new units of study in English language arts, planning frequency, and topics of discussion during planning. Additionally, teams were asked to reflect on how they measured student growth. Teachers were asked to reflect on what they had learned about themselves professionally. Additionally, teachers were asked what areas they needed for additional professional learning and if there were any necessary changes they would like to see implemented to the team teaching instructional model. The researcher also sought to understand how teachers' perceptions at the beginning of the pilot program in order to measure whether or not the perceptions had shifted either after the year or if further investigation was needed throughout the intervention feedback. The survey was built to determine where teachers were currently thinking around their work as team teachers, how they were collaborating in conjunction with the updated units of study that had been implemented in Ela, were asked to reflect on their fears and accomplishments, and finally what work or support was needed as next steps within the push in team teaching model. The researcher – administrator consulted with a

data expert on the design and distribution of the survey as the researcher- administrator intended to use the survey data in order to make decisions around the professional learning intervention of the study. The researcher sent the survey to seven teachers and five out of the seven responded to the anonymous survey. Teachers were asked to respond individually to the survey not as teaching teams.

The administrative interviews were conducted with the principals and the assistant principals at each of the three middle schools in order to gather information on their perceptions of the first year of the push in team teaching model about the school's culture and climate on program change (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The six administrators of the three schools were each interviewed in a semi structured interview format (Appendix B). The questions were designed in collaboration with the teacher survey responses. The researcher transcribed each of the administration's interviews. The researcher sought information on the administration's perceptions around best practices in literacy instruction, information on the implementation of the pilot year, and areas of needed professional growth. The questions also targeted methods of professional development that could be used to maximize the impact of the professional learning sessions. Administration was also assigned an alias when compiling and transcribing data (Principal of School A, Assistant Principal of School A; Principal of School B, Assistant Principal of School B, Principal of School C, and Assistant Principal School C). Administration was interviewed individually so to not encourage group think between administrative partnerships.

Phase II Professional Learning Intervention Data Collection

The researcher gathered various data across each of the professional learning interventions (Professional Learning Sessions 1-5). Data were collected from the professional

learning sessions in the form of researcher field notes from team teacher collaboration sessions, field notes during the professional learning series, anonymous pre- survey and post surveys, and a follow up survey. The data included data from survey feedback and pre and post professional learning feedback forms. The researcher read the survey feedback as a whole document and did not read it from the individual teacher's response view in order to gather general feedback from the professional learning sessions. The researcher took anecdotal notes during the professional learning session to support planning for next steps of the work.

The researcher sought feedback from another administrator who attended the majority of Professional Learning Session 1 and Professional Learning Session 3. The researcher designed a targeted planning session with the team teachers (Professional Learning Session 2: Team Teacher Planning Session). The researcher attended three team teaching professional planning sessions, as one team teaches two varied levels of classes across two buildings. The researcher asked the team teachers guided questions during the team teaching professional learning session and took field notes during the meeting which were later coded for themes. The researcher sought feedback from a literacy coach who attended one of the professional learning sessions. The anecdotal notes and the themes from the anecdotal notes were compared to the themes created from the teacher survey responses from the pilot survey. The researcher used this data to refine the plan for the team teaching professional learning cycles 4 and 5.

Team Teachers had an option of attending a one-day professional learning session where the researcher presented a professional learning session (Professional Learning Session 4). The professional learning session was designed based on the data driven instructional planning presented in Phase I. The researcher asked teachers to complete an anonymous survey before the session and after the session. The pre and post surveys were coded with a symbol unique to the

respondent. The pre survey and post survey were linked based on that code that the respondent included on the paper survey. During the professional learning session, the researcher presented Friend (2008) six team teaching (co-teaching) instructional strategies. Teachers used student data and the data driven instructional planning framework to work collaboratively with both their team teaching partner and another team teacher partnership using the concept based units of study. The researcher completed field notes during the team teaching day and also completed a reflection at the end of the session.

The researcher implemented a final professional learning session (Professional Learning Session 5) to follow up with teams and to survey if the teams had implemented any of the six co-teaching strategies outlined in session 4. Team teachers used a follow up survey (Appendix D) and identified themselves using the code that they had used during Professional Learning Session 4. The researcher coded the open-ended response survey using open coding, then organized the data into the four categories of themes (open themes, unexpected themes, outliers, and major and minor themes) which informed the researcher's findings. During the intervention, teacher data from feedback surveys (Appendix D) were aggregated and reviewed for patterns within teacher responses. The researcher aggregated feedback from whole department learning sessions and identifying information was redacted. In addition the researcher kept field notes during and after the professional learning sessions with all teachers.

Throughout the planning of the professional learning session additional input was sought from reading teachers in the teaching teams and from building literacy coaches. Additional feedback was sought on the focus of the professional learning intervention from an administrator not included in the pilot and also literacy coaches within the district. Additionally, the researcher sought feedback from a building administrator who participated in the whole department

professional learning cycles. The data collection and analysis in both the retrospective study and action research are ongoing as the organization (the district and the classrooms) needs continue to evolve and change (Lapan et al., 2012). The researcher was open to finding ideas that were contrary to the initial data, as the researcher continues to collect information through multiple methods from multiple sources and the action research should fit the needs of the organization (Lapan et al., 2012; Tuckman & Harper, 2012).

Data Analysis

According to Maxwell (2013), "Data in a qualitative study can include virtually anything that you see, hear, or that is otherwise communicated to you while conducting the study" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 87). During the retrospective review in Phase I, the researcher researched and read secondary documents to set the scene of instructional practices in Ela and in reading instruction. Secondary document analysis included reading former pacing guides and supporting curriculum documents. Additionally, the researcher read a report conducted by an etic consulting firm that was presented to the district as opportunities to close the achievement gap. This etic analysis from an outside organization had been completed the year prior to the retrospective review. The researcher reviewed meeting notes and agendas from meetings with reading teachers and department teachers. The researcher used open coding on the secondary sources and identified initial ideas about areas of improvement. As a result of the retrospective case study, the findings of the literature review, the rewriting of the curriculum, the adoption of a new aligned assessment system, and the shifting instructional model of the middle school, the team taught push in model was piloted.

Survey analysis

At the end of pilot year, the pilot year teams took an anonymous survey that consisted of twelve questions written to explore teachers' perceptions of the team teaching pilot and to explore possible topics for needed professional learning (Appendix A). Seven teachers were sent the survey and five teachers responded. The pilot study survey results were coded using an open coding system and the researcher interpreted the findings by looking for key words and phrases and grouped into themes in order to process the information and to "develop a general meaning of each segment" (Creswell, 2009). The researcher read the survey responses and manually coded for open themes; the four theme types used were common themes, unexpected themes, outliers, and major and minor themes (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used survey information to explore current practices, beliefs, attitudes and opinions about the pilot year of the team teaching push in intervention model (Creswell, 2012).

Out of the seven teachers who were part of the pilot team push in team teaching, six teachers were part of the professional learning intervention. During the second year of implementation, the teaching team dynamic changed. In the pilot year, there were a total of four teaching pairs with one reading teacher working with two English language arts teacher. In the second year, an additional reading teacher was hired in the district, increasing the number of reading teachers from three to four. Additionally, a reading teacher was replaced. In year two there was a total of four teacher team combinations, but one school only had the extended English language arts block in grade seven as there were not enough eighth grade students that qualified.

Administrative Interview Analysis

The researcher transcribed all interviews, read transcripts of the interviews several times, took margin notes, and generalized the information into big codes and then into more manageable axial codes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The researcher chose to transcribe the administrative interviews as the sample size was small (six interviews) and analyze them by hand, marking it for open codes and constructing themes or concepts from the field of education initially then color coding giving the researcher what Creswell (2012) refers to as a "hands on feel" (p. 240) of the data and to get a sense of the data by writing notes on the transcripts that include "short phrases, concepts, or hunches" (p. 243). The researcher used Creswell's (2012) categories for themes to guide the coding process: common themes, unexpected themes, outliers, major and minor themes. The researcher worked to find major themes or broad concepts from the codes using what Creswell (2012) calls layering the analysis. Transcripts of administrator interviews were analyzed and coded for themes recording educational concepts and memos in the margins (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Clark, 2011). The researcher coded transcribed data for open codes then axial codes and the researcher did not use direct participant quotes in the report to maintain the confidentiality. The coding system provided the researcher emerging codes during the transcription process and during the close read of the data. Codes were identified with phrases and colors within the transcriptions. Code categories were then truncated into themes. The researcher transcribed and read the transcriptions and cross checked the codes and themes multiple times in order to identify the needs of the professional learning cycle and the delivery method of the professional learning cycle that was offered as part of Phase II. The researcher read across the data and paraphrased, pulling salient points and creating containers that lead from open codes and notes to determine axial codes then used the axial codes to determine focused,

truncated themes. The researcher wanted to create fewer themes as “it is best to write a qualitative report providing detailed information from a few themes” (Creswell, 2012). These codes/ themes were categorized initially into different categories of themes including “ordinary themes”, or themes that would be typically found or be expected to find; “unexpected themes”, themes that were exposed that were a surprise; “hard to classify themes”, ideas that are outliers to the remainder of the data, or some “major or minor themes” where the minor themes are able to be nested under the major themes (Creswell, 2012, pp. 248-249).

The researcher reviewed the analyzed data (axial codes) from both the pilot survey and the administrative interviews and reflected on both the emergent codes found during the open coding and the emergent themes from the pilot year survey. Responses from interviews were cross-referenced with the anonymous teacher survey using the following matrix to identify relationships between the responses from the data sets and to create some synthesized themes of next stages used within the professional learning intervention (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: *Data Merging from Pilot Year Data*

	Vision of Strong Literacy Instruction	Reflection TTPIM-Strengths	Professional Learning (3,4, 7)	Instructional Strategies (5,6)	Teachers as Adult Learners	Admin PD needs (9,10)	Ela Changes (11,12)	Other
Purpose of TT model	X	X	X					
Concerns		X	X	X	X			
Instructional Strategies	X		X	X				
Ela Changes							X	X
Reading Intervention Practices	X						X	X
Student Growth Measures		X		X				
Planning Practices (7, 8)			X	X				
Professional Learning (9,10)			X	X	X	X		
Necessary Changes to TTPIM	X	X	X	X				
Other	X		X					X

Categories within the teacher survey responses and administrative open questions included: the vision of strong literacy and best practices within intervention (with a focus on team teaching); reflections on the implementation of the team taught push in model; next stages

of professional learning including methods of professional development delivery; teachers use of planning practices including the use of data; feedback on the changes made to the English language arts curricular and instructional frame and the relationship between those changes and the work of team teaching. The researcher sought information on what changes might be considered to the team teaching push in model and also what areas teachers needed further professional support. The researcher sought to understand if teachers and administration were connecting the work of changes made to the Ela department's curriculum and instructional approach and the work of team teachers within that work. The researcher's field notes, reflections, agenda, and minutes were also analyzed as the researcher relied on anecdotal observational notes and reflective journals during the planning and implementation of the professional learning phases of the action research study.

Pilot year data were used to determine the focus areas of the professional learning phases of the intervention; the researcher included information from both building administration and teachers in order to triangulate data that described their perceptions of the pilot year of the push in team teaching model as knowledge from "multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity of our world" strengthens the research (Creswell, 2012, p. 207). Through the cross analysis the two overarching themes that emerged from both the teacher anonymous surveys and the administrative interviews was that the team teachers needed additional professional learning support on the types of team teaching (roles and responsibilities), and the use of data in the planning, design, and implementation of differentiated instruction in small groups. An overarching goal was set for the entire Ela department around data driven instructional planning that was included as it also directly pertained to the needs of the team teachers. Feedback from

these sessions was received as the researcher typically receives feedback after full department professional development in the form of a survey.

Between the phases of the research, the researcher administrator reflected on her work and identifies steps of professional learning that would be specific to the team teachers. The researcher reflected on professional development research in order to design the sequence and the construct of the different phases of the intervention. The researcher chose topics for the professional learning sessions that teachers would find relevant to their work within the Ela department and within their work as team teachers that would help teachers better understand their practices both within the concept-based instructional frame and also within the team taught configuration. Additionally, a focus of the professional development was to improve the praxis of team teachers and to strengthen teachers' efficacy in using the updated curricular frame and taking further action on how to better support students within the extended team taught push in model (Tuckman & Harper, 2012).

The researcher read the transcriptions and reviewed the anonymous survey data created a table of the overarching themes and wrote a descriptive reflections of the findings in the effort to identify the elements of instructional practice and assessment practices needed to be integrated into the professional learning interventions found in Phase II.

Credibility, Authenticity, and Dependability

Data Triangulation

The researcher employed various strategies to "demonstrate the accuracy of their findings" (Creswell, 2009, p. 235) including triangulating data between stages of the research between teachers and administration. Administrators were interviewed after the teachers took the anonymous survey as the researcher needed multiple forms of data from varied responders

(Creswell, 2009; Creswell 2012; Lapan et al., 2012). The researcher interviewed each administration separately to gather individual points of view. The researcher also gave teachers individual surveys that were to be completed electronically and individually. Teams were not asked to generate any co-constructed feedback with the exception of one stage of the action research where the researcher attended a team meeting with each team. This feedback was gathered through anecdotal notes of the researcher and focused on team based questions that could be answered within the team frame. The researcher triangulated data results between multiple forms of feedback (anonymous survey, pre- survey, post survey, and administrative interviews) and worked with professional notes and researcher reflections.

Creating Thick Rich Data

The researcher created field notes, used agendas, secondary source review, and minutes to create rich, thick descriptions throughout the course of the retrospective case study and the action research phases (Creswell, 2009). In qualitative research, "trustworthiness has become an important concept because it allows researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative research" (Given, 2008). The retrospective review allowed the researcher to gain insight into the history of changes within the district and provided important information that created a framework for the action research.

Expert Audit

The researcher employed additional support to check for dependability and authenticity by asking an administrator not involved with the study and literacy coaches in the field to review stages of the work including the focus of the action research and the stages of the professional learning. By having an outside source check the themes, it creates a check for the researcher. Additionally, the researcher is aware of the possible reactivity to the work throughout however

action research cycle, the researcher used information from the retrospective review case to create professional learning for all teachers as an effort to move the work of all stakeholders and ultimately "revise and improve practice" (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). In order to check for bias within the survey questions, the researcher consulted with a data expert within the district to review questions on the survey. An administrator was asked to review the questions used during the administrative interviews for content and clarity. Additionally, the researcher presented the data to an administrator who was not part of the pilot to cross check the identified themes best identified the coded interviews and to give the researcher feedback on possible focus areas for the professional learning sessions. Information gathered from the study was presented to reading teachers and to literacy coaches throughout the process to gather feedback on the direction of the professional learning cycles.

Member Check

The researcher had participants fill in interview questions via electronic survey and participants can anonymously type their answers. Additionally, research calls for additional work in the area of best practices in middle school and high school reading interventions as the needs of the adolescent are significantly different than the needs of an elementary student. Additionally, the co-teaching model of one core classroom teacher and one special education teacher has been used in the district in the case study and is considered a viable infrastructure to support students within the classroom. The researcher sought feedback from other professionals including literacy coaches and other administrators outside of the pilot and within the pilot on the content of professional learning sessions. The researcher reviewed, coded, and analyzed the data after the responses were aggregated and did not include identifying information. Data from

feedback was shared with literacy coaches as part of ongoing professional development planning.

Researcher Bias and Credibility

The researcher maintained trustworthiness and credibility throughout the course of this study being aware of her positionality in the district being studied. The researcher wrote ongoing reflections and kept copious field notes during all stages of the research. Additionally, the researcher included an ethnographic reflection at the end of the research process to articulate her reflections in this process (Maxwell, 2013). Two threats, according to Maxwell (2013) should be analyzed when checking credibility and validity within a qualitative study, researcher bias and reactivity (p. 124). The researcher has been a language arts teacher that taught in a team teaching model in the middle school and an English teacher on the high school level which also piloted a team teaching model however, the aforementioned teams consisted of an Ela teacher and a social studies teacher; students in the described models received reading support outside of the classroom in an isolated intervention. Additionally, the researcher is currently a district supervisor and central office administrator; it is an ongoing and natural part of the researcher's job description to ask probing questions around curriculum design and instructional practices thereby not "forcing influence" from an etic perspective.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Phase II Data Analysis and Implications

Phase II of the action research began with the review of the pilot year team teaching push in intervention model. The impetus of the team teaching model was to meet the challenges articulated by both teachers in the reading department and the Ela department and to provide students more time reading text and more time working in English language arts. The schedule of the case study schools was a traditional schedule with approximately fifty-minute periods leaving little time to add independent reading. Additionally, administration was in the process of exploring alternative scheduling options for the middle schools as scheduling in the secondary setting is complex and middle schools have several moving parts, and innovation can be thwarted by traditional secondary school systems (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). Within the pilot phase of the team taught push in intervention model, several factors influenced the implementation during the pilot year. Criteria were established for student placement based on a district-designated assessment (NWEA MAP 6+). Reading intervention teachers schedules shifted dramatically as the reading teachers pushed in to core Ela classroom for one double period which equated to 104 minutes of instructional time for students who met the criteria as opposed to the 52 minutes of a standard Ela class period. A meeting was held in each middle school consisting of building administration and reading teachers where student data was reviewed and team taught classes were created. Students who were recommended for the team taught classes did not attend World Language, instead they continued with the minutes of Ela instruction that they were allotted in grade six. All students attended a full year of social studies instruction but did not attend world language. Literacy coaches had worked with social studies teachers to infuse best literacy practices into the social studies content area and continued to do

so during the action research while they did extend their work to other content areas including Ela.

The researcher completed several readings of the data and considered carefully the following focus areas to guide the researcher's analysis of the pilot year of the team teaching push in model: the perceptions of teachers and administration on team teaching; connections between team teaching and the instructional and curriculum shifts made in Ela; similarities and differences in how teams are using planning and instructional time (frequency of planning, discussion topics, methods of instruction used most frequently); value of collaboration between Ela and reading teacher; and additional professional learning needs as indicated by the similarities or connections between the teacher feedback and the administration's feedback.

Teacher Surveys

In order to better understand the results of the anonymous survey from the pilot year, the researcher charted the responses (Table 4.1) using themes and then wrote a descriptive summary.

Table 4.1: *Anonymous Survey Coding Pilot Team Teachers*

Theme Type	Open Codes
Common Themes in Education	Supporting Student Success Lack of Time Collaboration / Relationships Teacher efficacy/ confidence Positive Learning Environment Using assessment data frequently Reference to curriculum Reference to instructional approach (shifts) Lesson and intervention design
Unexpected Themes	Team teachers were using team teaching instructional strategies Team teaching Station (Rotation) Teaching Use of planning time (focus was more on student performance, lack of student performance, and some discussion of lesson planning)
Outliers	When asked to identify which team teaching technique they used, over half of the responses were "other" without a description.
Major Themes and Minor Themes	Roles and Responsibilities in a Team Taught Classroom • Varied roles/ Varied Expertise • Clarifying the roles • Division of labor • Equity • Shared responsibility Planning and Implementing Instruction in a Team • Core instruction vs. intervention • Use of varied teaching techniques o Use of small group instruction o Use of book clubs

Roles and Responsibilities (Team Teaching)

Most teachers identified the purpose of the team taught double Ela block was for students to receive more specialized instruction benefitting from the experience of having two teachers with additional instructional opportunities with a more intense level of instruction. Most teachers indicated that they were concerned about the roles and responsibilities of each teacher in the push in team teaching block including who would be in charge of the class (power differential), who would be responsible for planning and grading, who would be developing and delivering the different types of necessary instruction (intervention and core Ela content).

Planning Practices and Lesson Design (Team Teaching)

There was also some evidence that teachers were reflecting but it was not consistent across the anonymous survey data. Additionally, there was no evidence that indicated that teachers were using collaboration time to design the best implementation practices for student learning goals. Most teachers indicated that additional time for planning and collaboration would be optimal. All teachers were able to identify at least one way in which student success is assessed and measured with the most common being the NWEA test which is a computer adapted norm referenced test that was administered three times during the pilot year. More than one teacher responded with other types of assessment that were used to measure student growth including local district common assessments, the use of the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and the use of the GRADE which is also administered at the beginning and end of the school year. Some teachers indicated that increased test scores was important as was the use of data. Teachers reported varied frequency of common preparation time and during that time topics included student ability, reviewing the units of study, challenges and changes needed for students, and discussion of small group work. Some teachers noted that they had learned more

about their team teachers' area of expertise. Some responses indicated that teachers learned more about the discreet skills of reading while some teachers learned more about the expectations of the grade level language arts work and the components of the concept based curriculum (Erickson & Lanning, 2014; Lanning, 2013). Additionally, some teachers noted evidence of differentiated instructional approaches for example: book clubs, station work, small group rotations, support or guide on the side while the other teacher was teaching, or sharing the responsibility of classroom monitoring.

Variance in Team Teaching Instructional Practices

Within the survey results, 4 out of 5 teachers identified "one teach, one observe" as the instructional strategy with a score of 5 or higher on a scale from 1-7, 1 representing the lowest amount of times used and 7 being the highest amount of times used. Additionally, only 1 teacher indicated that station teaching was used with a score of 5 or higher, indicating that this was not a common instructional approach employed in the pilot phase of the team teaching push in model. Additionally, teachers identified "other" as the highest usage instructional strategy but did not indicate the type of instruction that was used.

Based on teachers perceptions from the pilot year as indicated from the teacher survey, several concepts emerged regarding the teachers' perceptions of the team teaching pilot year. These concepts included: the roles and relationships between the Ela teacher and the reading teacher, collaboration and reflective practices, and the hierarchy of instructional strategies used in the team teaching environment.

Collaboration and Planning Practices

Teachers noted that their collaborative conversations included discussing the units of study being implemented as part of the Ela shift in instructional practices. Teachers also noted

that student concerns were discussed, and teachers used the time to construct lesson plans. Teachers noted that data was discussed during planning time. Teachers were asked how frequently they planned together and there was variance between the responses (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: *Frequency of Teacher Team Planning Time*

Number of Teacher Responses:	Frequency of planning:
2	Every Day
1	Every Other Day
1	Twice a Week
1	Once a Week
0	Once Every Other Week

Roles and Relationships

Each teacher team is comprised of an English language arts teacher and a reading teacher. Teachers were not asked to divulge what their role was or identifying information as part of the survey. The researcher received five responses from the survey. All teacher survey responses referred to the responsibilities or roles they would have within the team taught classes. Respondents noted that there was concerns about working collaboratively and that teachers wanted to understand and have a role within the team. Some responses indicated that it was helpful to have more than one teacher in the room, and some indicated that a special education teacher was also part of the team teaching classroom. Additionally, the survey results indicated possible inferences to teachers feeling more efficacious either in teaching reading skills or teaching Ela curriculum. Some teachers noted that as the pilot progressed they gained a better understanding of the individual teacher's role in the classroom, but that defining roles was

difficult at the beginning of the process and some responses noted that further clarification on roles and responsibilities was still needed. Some responses indicated that one teacher in the team was taking more of a lead on teaching, other responses indicated that there was varied roles within the team teaching block. All teachers noted that the purpose of push in team teaching was to give students additional time and to give students the opportunity to work with two teachers of varying levels of expertise with some responses particularly noting that time spent working with team teachers would include specialized instruction.

Hierarchy of Instructional Strategies used in Team Teaching

The survey asked: On a scale of 1-7 (1 being lowest and 7 being highest) which instructional strategy does your team use most? The researcher grouped these scales in a category of high frequency, a response of a 6 or a 7, mid frequency, a response of a 3, 4, or 5, and low frequency, response of a 1 or 2 (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: *Frequency of Varied Instructional Strategies (Friend, 2008)*

Frequency (Number of Teacher Responses):	Instructional Strategy
High Frequency (3) Mid Frequency (2) Low Frequency (0)	One Teach, One Observe
High Frequency (1) Mid Frequency (1) Low Frequency (3)	Station Teaching
High Frequency (1) Mid Frequency (4) Low Frequency (0)	Parallel Teaching
High Frequency (0) Mid Frequency (4) Low Frequency (1)	Alternative Teaching
High Frequency (0) Mid Frequency (2) Low Frequency (3)	Teaming
High Frequency (2) Mid Frequency (1) Low Frequency (2)	One Teach, One Assist
High Frequency (3) Mid Frequency (1) Low Frequency (1)	Other

The survey asked teachers when they indicated "other" to please describe what "other" indicated, yet no descriptions were provided within the survey results. Responses varied across all of the team teaching (co-teaching) structures employed within team teaching classrooms (Friend, 2008). The lowest responses were in the areas of station teaching, teaming, and alternative teaching. Responses were higher in the one teach, one observe, and parallel teaching.

Professional Growth and Professional Learning Needs

Teacher survey indicated that some teachers would like additional time to plan and needed additional materials including additional progress monitoring tools. Teachers also indicated that they would like to share their work with teachers in other middle schools and also have additional time to plan as grade level teams. Teachers also requested clarification in the roles and responsibilities within the team teaching structure and some responses alluded that this would give both teachers more value within the team teaching structure. Professional growth included the team teaching environment created an alternative atmosphere within the classroom and that the more targeted instruction had provided better opportunities for learning including work within the units of study and book club work or small group instruction.

Administration Interviews

In order to triangulate data and collect thick, rich data while still considering the researcher's positionality in the district, the researcher gathered multiple forms of data around the pilot team teaching year including interviewing the principal and assistant principal from each middle school. The researcher used semi structured interview questions (Appendix B), transcribed the interviews, analyzed the interviews using open coding, and grouped the codes to establish major concepts and themes. The interview questions included questions on the administration's perceptions of the team teaching model including the implementation, what instructional techniques they had observed being employed in the team taught push in intervention model, ideas on professional learning for both team teachers and for administration, ways in which they believed the team teaching model could be strengthened, and what administration perceived as qualities related to strong literacy instruction and the shifts that had been made to Ela curriculum and expectations for implementing student centered instruction. Based on administration's perceptions from the pilot year as indicated from the coded

transcribed interviews, several themes emerged regarding the administration's perceptions of the pilot year of the team teaching push in model.

Table 4.4 : *Semi- Structured Administration Interviews Coding*

Theme Type	Open Codes Truncated to Possible Themes
Common Themes in Education	Instruction designed to meet the needs of students Evidence of collaboration (time needed to plan, frequency of planning, cohesion between goals and instruction) Importance of differentiated instruction and using data to drive instruction (whole group and small group)
Unexpected Themes	Would support more choice for students in reading and writing Sees the Ela work as leading the way for other disciplines Starting to wrestle with the confines of traditional scheduling
Outliers	Differing opinions on the ease of implementation
Major Themes and Minor Themes	Evidence of some team teaching work • One teach one observe • Stations • Alternative teaching (including progress monitoring) Roles and Responsibilities of team teachers (where does core teaching end and intervention begin)
Other Potential Code Categories	Overall positive feedback on the team teaching Model needs to be refined or strengthened See additional components of team teaching See additional components of differentiated instruction (within the team and within the school)

Across the six administrative interviews several major themes emerged: the administration felt that the team teaching push in model supported students; strong evidence of collaboration between the team teachers; evidence that team teachers were using data (Benchmark assessment system, progress monitoring tools, and NWEA MAP) to inform instruction; evidence that all teachers needed further support how to differentiate instruction in Ela and reading and other content areas; a limited variance of instructional approaches used in the team teaching classes; and connections to the Ela curricular and instructional shifts (book clubs, mentor and anchor texts, small group work) was evident.

Team Teaching Instructional Practices

Administration reported that students in the team teaching classes were engaging in varied types of learning in the classes that they observed. Additionally, most administration made mention of the importance of collaboration for team teachers and also indicated that team teachers were working closely with data. Administration noted that they had observed a limited variance of instructional approaches used in the team teaching classes. Some administration noted that sometimes teachers were both teaching at the same time, and sometimes one teacher was teaching (modeling, direct instruction) and the other teacher was observing. All administration mentioned the use of small groups or station type teaching in the team taught classes. Administration would like to see variance on how the team teachers are working with students. Different administration had different experiences viewing the different teaching models. The team teaching models that were seen in some configuration included: one teach, one observe; station teaching; and one teach, one assist. All administration noted that students were working in small groups within the team taught classrooms.

Collaboration and Using Data to Design Differentiated Instruction

Administration's responses suggested that teachers in the team taught push in intervention model spent time working with student data in order to plan instruction. All administration referred to the use of some form of data, while the forms of data varied between their answers. Administration noted that they would like to see teachers use more differentiated instructional practices both in the team taught classrooms and also in other classes across the school day. Administration also reported that there was evidence of more time spent in small groups and with students reading during the push in intervention block. Observed practices in the push in team taught class included: more frequent small group work, book club work, the workshop model, working on academic vocabulary, and assessing students within class time. Additionally, some administrators expressed that the team teachers were using data more regularly than other teachers. While administration did not give specific feedback on observations made of team teachers planning sessions, they did articulate that they personally valued that teachers needed time to collaborate in order for the team teaching model to be effective. Most administrators also spoke of the importance of a good relationship between the team teachers and some mentioned that personalities that complement each other are important when designing teacher teams.

Roles and Relationships of Team Teachers

Most administration mentioned the importance of the personalities of the teachers working in the team and the ability for teachers to plan together and work together during a class. Administration indicated that they also valued teachers having time to co-plan and collaborate regularly as without the articulated plan the team teaching would not be as effective. Administration also articulated that teachers have areas of expertise and the varied expertise

brought varied skills to the team teaching environment. During observations some administration noted that teachers were working together to deliver instruction, that within the team taught classrooms there was evidence of planning and working as a team.

Connections to Ela Curricular and Instructional Shifts

All administration made direct connections to the Ela curricular and instructional shifts. Administration noted that students were working in varied text types (book club books, mentor and anchor texts) and were working in varied ways (small group work, flexible grouping, independent reading, progress monitoring, reading workshop model, increased student discourse) was evident. All administration articulated that as educational leaders they value the importance of literacy and articulated that additional work was happening to improve literacy practices across the other classrooms in each building Administration saw connections between the team teaching model and the curricula and instructional shifts made in Ela. Administration noted that there was small group work happening within the team taught push in model, some administration saying that more team teaching or collaborative grouping was happening in these classes than other classes within the schools.

Administration also responded that the teachers in the push in team taught classes were using data to inform practices, some saying that teachers in the team teaching push in model were doing data analysis on another level. Administration also noted repeatedly that all teachers were struggling with the concept of differentiated instruction within the Ela and other academic blocks.

Professional Learning: Next Steps and Methods of Professional Learning Delivery

All administration noted that they would like to see additional variance to how team teachers are instructing classes and how each member of the team was contributing to the team

taught classes. Each response included one or more of Friend's (2008) models of co-teaching instructional approaches, but the administration would like to see further variety overall in the team teaching classes. Overall administration's responses indicated that the team teaching push in model supported students including that they observed and had evidence that team teachers were using data (Benchmark assessment system, progress monitoring tools, and NWEA MAP) to inform instruction. All administration included that all teachers (beyond just team teachers) needed further support in how to differentiate instruction in Ela and reading and other content areas. Administration responded that teachers in the push in team teaching model may not need anything additional or new, that the changes in Ela had supported the work of the push in team teaching model, but that the team teaching work could be refined. Administration voiced that they would like to see more variance in the way that teachers were using the push in team teaching time while they did see a lot of small group work being used, they expressed that there could be other opportunities to grow. Administration noted that all teachers both in the Ela department and the greater school community would benefit from additional work with differentiated instruction. The researcher asked questions to gather information on which professional learning methods the administration believed would best support their teachers' learning. Suggested options for professional development delivery included: hands on work, coaching, bringing research to the work, working from strong practices already in place, modeling and visiting other teachers, and also incorporating theory into professional learning design.

Data Source Merging

The researcher used the information from the retrospective study, the literature review, and the pilot study data to create research frames for the professional learning intervention

sessions and completed a cross analysis to find more focused themes it into more focused themes (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: *Researcher Inquiry Frames to Determine Professional Learning Sessions*

Teacher Survey Open Codes	Administration Interviews Open Codes	Axial Codes	Final Themes used to further focus Intervention
Purpose/ Perceptions of Purpose of TT	Purpose/ Perceptions of TT Pilot	Analyzing and using data for planning purposes	Data Driven Instructional Model within Concept Based Curriculum Unit
Planning Time/ Planning Practices/ Planning Discussions	Curricular and Instructional Shifts in Ela	Connections to work done in CORE Ela curriculum and instructional practices	Dedicated time to co-plan within a unit of study
Assessment/ Measuring Student Growth	Use of Data/ Small Group Work	Unique needs of Team Teachers: Collaboration Time, Roles and Responsibilities	Student Goal Setting and Small Group Instruction
Methods of Delivery	Lack of Variance in Delivery Model	Team Teaching Instructional Strategies	Team Teaching Instructional Strategies (Six co-teaching strategies (Friend, 2008)
Next Steps of PL	Best Practices of PL for staff	Strengthening Ela instructional model (Differentiated Instruction)	Extended opportunity for TT in addition to full department PL

The researcher then aligned the cross cutting concepts and created a focus for the professional learning intervention sessions (Table 4.6)

Table 4.6: *Researcher Frames: Intervention Focus Development*

Cross Cutting Concepts	Intervention Focus
Analyzing data and using data for planning purposes	Data Driven Instructional Model within Concept Based Curriculum Unit
Connections to work done in CORE Ela curriculum and instructional practices	Building planning practices as individuals, within grade level, and within a team. Dedicated time to co-plan within a unit of study
Unique needs of Team Teachers: Collaboration Time, Roles and Responsibilities	Student Goal Setting and Small Group Instruction for Ela and Team Teachers (How do team teachers balance core instruction and intervention practices)
Team Teaching Instructional Strategies	Team Teaching Instructional Strategies (Six co-teaching strategies (Friend, 2008)
Strengthening Ela instructional model (Differentiated Instruction)	Benefits of team teaching as a means to developing differentiated instructional

The researcher used data gathered from the retrospective review and pilot data along with research on adolescent readers and the professional learning needs of teachers to develop the professional learning sessions. The professional learning themes included: using data to set goals for students; planning and implementing instruction using a concept based curriculum; the alternative methods of team teaching; and the roles and responsibilities of team teachers in the extended Ela block. The researcher also researched methods on how to design and implement professional tiered professional development and the needs of adult learners (Knowles, 1988; Knowles, 1990). The professional learning was designed to provide an iterative process that would support and sustain both the changes made to the core English language arts curriculum and instructional model. The researcher designed stages of professional learning for the entire Ela department and then created additional iterations of the professional learning in order to better meet the needs of the team teachers. The action research cycles were both iterative as the

methods were repeated in each of the sessions, but also differentiated in order to meet the unique needs of the teacher teams working in the team taught instructional model. The professional learning cycle included the following stages (Table 4.7):

Table 4.7: *Professional Learning Sessions Objectives and Measures*

	Teacher Learning Targets	Participants	Data Collected
Professional Learning Session 1	Teachers will observe the researcher analyze student data from one class and use it for a data driven instructional plan. (Appendix D) Teachers will work with grade level teams to explore local data and discuss how to design lessons within the next unit of study.	Team Teachers; Reading Teachers; Ela department	Feedback forms Anecdotal notes Anonymous responses: *What knowledge and skills must all middle school students acquire or continue to develop in order to maintain and accelerate their development of proficiency in academic literacy?*
Professional Learning Session 2	Indicated Goals of Team Teaching Collaboration Meeting Explore team dynamics and planning practices Explore the needs of students based on big data (NWEA, SBA) and local data (BAS 2, classroom anecdotal evidence, District Common Assessments) Explore team teachers plan for the next 3-4 weeks of instruction Explore teaching team's priorities for student learning in the next 3-4 weeks (goal setting)	Team Teachers : Planning Session	Researcher's field notes Researcher's reflection journals

Professional Learning Session 3	Small group instructional planning using a demonstration notebook (Roberts & Roberts 2016)	Team Teachers; Reading Teachers; Ela department	Feedback Forms Anecdotal Notes
Professional Learning Session 4	Team Teaching PL Day 1. Reflection and Goal Writing 2. How does our instructional plan best meet the needs of our students? a. Reviewing Friend's (2008) six models of co-teaching i. One Teach, One Observe ii. Station Teaching iii. Parallel Teaching iv. Alternative Teaching v. Teaming vi. One Teach, One Assist b. Which of these strategies are the best fit for which learning situation? (How can we become more discerning about how we are spending our instructional minutes?) 3. Discuss schema and long term vs. short term transfer of knowledge a. Students need time to practice what has been taught b. Students need experiences within class that build both strength and stamina 4. Reviewing the concept based unit of study components a. Processes, concepts, strategies, and skills b. Structure of process for Ela (understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text, and producing text) c. Using a data driven instructional plan including the team teaching instructional models	Team Teachers	Pre- Survey (anonymous) Post –Survey (anonymous)
Professional Learning	Team Teaching Follow Up	Team	Follow Up

Session 5	Teachers	Survey (anonymous)

Phase II Action Research Findings

The researcher worked to use the data from Phase I including the pilot year in order to build professional learning sessions in Phase II that would support teachers in team teaching, identify potential advantages, and to address the needs of teachers after the pilot year of teaching within a team taught instructional model within the second year of implementation.

Teacher Professional Learning Session 1 and 3

All Ela teachers and reading teachers participated in PL Session 1 and PL Session 3. During this session the researcher took anecdotal notes and sought feedback from another administrator. The researcher considered the work of the two full department professional learning sessions in order to best articulate the work of the team teaching PL Session 4, as that phase was designed specifically for the team teachers. The researcher worked to create a connection between the work of the full department to move forward the concept- based data driven instruction model with the team teachers need to further grow in their work with the team teaching instructional model strategies. PL Session 1 concentrated on the use of NWEA data to determine a plan of action with students within the concept units of study. PL Session 3 explored using small group instruction and targeted learning goals around key reading and writing strategies and skills students need to be a proficient reader and writer. Additionally, teachers practiced using a teaching tool called a demonstration notebook from *DIY Literacy* (Roberts & Roberts, 2016). Teacher feedback was gathered during the session in researcher notes and charts and after the professional learning session through feedback surveys (Appendix D). The

researcher reflected on the impact and outcome of the full professional learning session and used reflection notes and teacher feedback from Professional Learning Session 1 and Professional Learning Session 3 to further plan Professional Learning Session 4 for Team Teachers.

Team Teacher Professional Learning Session 2: Team Planning

During the team planning professional learning session the researcher met with each team of teachers. The researcher had a frame of questions used with each team and provided teachers a framework for the questions. The researcher took anecdotal notes and completed a reflection after each team teaching planning session. Upon the meetings with each team, the feedback from teachers varied. One identified limitation is within one school the team teachers consisted of one reading teacher and a long-term substitute. During the subsequent professional learning sessions, the teacher returned to her classroom assignment and participated in the department professional learning and the day long team teaching professional learning. Teachers articulated that team teaching has given them a different perspective on both what it is to teach reading and also what the demands of grade level text and learning expectations look like in the Ela class. Teachers articulated that they were more aware of the both the curriculum and the work of the reading teachers as a result of working in the team teaching model. In addition, teams identified that the collaboration and planning time they spent together was invaluable, as they were able to consider both the needs of the students in the classroom and also the demands of the updated Ela curriculum. In addition the changes made to the curriculum impacted the team's ability to engage in team teaching. Through the lens of concept based instructional model, both reading teachers and Ela teachers are able to make connections between process, strategies, and skill to content or concepts, as the concept based instructional model encourages students to be reading varied texts and completing varied thinking around those texts. Also, the concept based curriculum is

organized partially by universal theme (Erickson & Lanning, 2014; Lanning, 2013) which encourages students to synthesize their thinking across both fiction and nonfiction, giving both the Ela teacher and the reading teacher the opportunity to work differently within the classroom. Upon the first phase of the professional learning, it was also evident that teachers were trying to maintain one period of the class as an intervention block, while the other period was used to team teach into the Ela curriculum where students could apply and practice the reading skills taught during intervention.

The researcher planned Professional Learning Session 2 as an opportunity to collect more current data from current teams. The professional learning session consisted of the following focus areas: team dynamics and team planning, review of student needs and use of data to determine needs and set goals, and priorities within curriculum and instruction for team teachers over the next three to four weeks. The researcher took anecdotal notes during the planning sessions and used the information to review the data that was presented in the anonymous teacher survey data (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: *PL Session 2 Anecdotal Notes Coded to Major Themes from Pilot Survey*

Major Themes (Pilot Survey)	Open Codes (Team Teaching Anecdotal Notes)
Roles and Responsibilities in a Team Taught Classroom • Varied roles/ Varied Expertise • Clarifying the roles • Division of labor • Equity • Shared responsibility	Teams had varying methods for prioritizing learning on a day to day basis Emphasis on shared responsibility, celebration, and ongoing reflection
Planning and Implementing Instruction in a Team Use of planning time (focus was more on student performance, lack of student performance, and some discussion of lesson planning) • Core instruction vs. intervention • Use of varied teaching techniques o Use of small group instruction o Use of book clubs	Variance in team planning across teams, both in frequency (amount of time spent planning) and topic (daily lesson plans, student goal setting, big picture thinking. Planning was ongoing for many teams Planning was fast and ongoing for many teams Teachers discussed using data to determine instructional focus- varied approaches including book clubs and small intervention groups All teams mentioned some aspects of writing

Teachers indicated that they did spend time reflecting on instruction as a team. Also, multiple teachers expressed that they are focused on short term goal setting and long term goal setting for learners some using big data (NWEA, SBA) and some referred to local assessments (readers' responses, common assessments using a district rubric). Some teams mentioned student work completion as a concern.

Team Teaching PL Session 4

During the team teacher professional learning session, teachers were asked to complete an anonymous survey in order to measure their awareness of different teaching instructional

models available to team teachers (Appendix D). Teachers ranked their knowledge of key learning targets including Friend's (2008) six types of co-teaching instructional moves.

Table 4.9: *Professional Learning Session 4 Pre and Post Survey Data* (Likert Scale 1-6, 6 being highest)

	T1		T2		T3		T4		T5		T6		T7		T8	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
One Teach, One Observe	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	6	6	1	5	6	6
Station Teaching	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6
Parallel Teaching	5	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	5	6	3	6	4	6
Alternative Teaching	1	6	2	6	2	6	3	6	1	6	4	6	2	5	5	6
Teaming	1	6	3	6	2	6	5	6	1	6	5	6	2	5	3	6
One Teach One Assist	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	1	6	4	6	3	4	6	6

Based on the pre and post survey results, the majority of teachers showed greater understanding of the six types of teaching models after Professional Learning Session 4. The researcher presented the teaming techniques and built the professional learning cycle in complement to Professional Learning Cycle 3.

Team Teacher PL Session 5

Team teachers met for one hour in an after school meeting. Teachers had identified questions on their exit survey from professional learning session 4 that the researcher brought forward as discussion points and presented a quick review. During the session teachers discussed which instructional strategies that they had implemented. Teachers were asked to fill in a follow up survey (Appendix D). This opportunity was only one hour in an after school meeting, so time was limited. Teachers identified which teaching strategies they had been able to use between PL Session 4 and PL Session 5 (Table 4.6).

The researcher analyzed how the team teachers from the pilot and the team teachers from the professional learning cycle identified various instructional strategies and how teachers implemented various instructional strategies. Initial data from the anonymous teacher survey administered at the end of the pilot year revealed that teachers used varied instructional strategies to meet the needs of students in the team teaching configuration. Data from pre- survey and post-survey during PL Session 3 indicated that teachers had varying ideas about the types of instructional strategies for team teachers. Teachers were asked to indicate how many times they had used each of the team teacher instructional strategies. The following data was collected anonymously from teachers two weeks after the team teaching professional learning cycle (See Table 4.10):

Table 4.10: *Follow Up Survey PL Session 5*

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
One Teach, One Observe	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Station Teaching	0	0	10	10	10	7	10	7-10
Parallel Teaching	10	10	10	10	0	5	0	3-5
Alternative Teaching	10	10	10	10	0	2	0	3
Teaming	0	0	6	6	5	0	5	0
One Teach One Assist	1	1	10	10	0	2	0	2-3

The data from the post professional learning cycle indicated that team teachers gained information on the types of team teaching after the one day professional learning session. Team teachers all reported that their learning of team teaching structures increased as a result of the professional development session. Each team identified two strategies that they would like to use next. Out of the identified strategies, teachers used station teaching the most. Teachers also used parallel teaching and alternative teaching. Few teachers used teaming, and only two teachers indicated that they had used one teach one observe. The researcher read the open ended responses from teachers from both feedback sessions. In PL 5 Session the researcher used the same system of coding as was used in the coding of the anonymous surveys and the administrative interviews. The researcher organized the following coded themes from the open ended survey questions:

Table 4.11: *Post Survey Coding PL Session 5*

Theme Type	Open Codes
Common Themes in Education	Evidence of additional team teaching techniques reviewed including: • Station teaching • Parallel teaching • Alternative teaching More information on the balance of team teaching More information on building stations (differentiated instruction, small skill groups; guided practice)
Unexpected Themes	Teams requested assistance with a schedule within class Teachers requested additional time after school to meet as a team Teachers appreciating the language to talk about the team teaching work (refer to the strategy during planning and during class transitions)
Outliers	More materials Defaulting to reading teacher for reading instruction Student follow through on homework
Major Themes and Minor Themes	Future plans include the use of additional team teaching strategies

Limitations

Limitations of this action research included that it was conducted within one school district in six language arts classrooms within three middle schools. Additionally, this action research was created based on local conditions within one educational organization (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010). A limitation included that the retrospective review included a historical retrospective analysis of reading intervention prior to the researcher working in the district. Limitations further included that the researcher planned and conducted research in the district

where she is a supervisor for English language arts where the researcher worked with teachers from pre k through high school. Researcher field notes were personal to the researcher and did not follow a set criteria for reflection, so the field notes can only be considered anecdotal, descriptive information. Staff size and staffing changes provided additional limitations to the research. Limitations included that the sample size included five teacher surveys out of the seven who were sent the survey. Staffing changed between the pilot of the push in team teaching model and the implementation of the professional learning intervention. One teacher who was part of the pilot team left the district and was replaced with a new reading teacher. An English language arts teacher who was part of the pilot was on personal leave and there has been a long term substitute working with the new reading teacher. As a result, one school participated in some of the action research but did not have the original representation that may have produced the anonymous survey results. An additional reading teacher was hired changing the reading teachers involved in the model from three to four. Student enrollment impacted staffing as well, and due to decreased enrollment the grade six Ela block instructional time was reduced, having a potential impact on reading teachers' ability in the team taught classrooms. The genesis of the model was to continue students in an extended amount of time in Ela and with the necessary change in schedule and with the decreased time in grade six English language arts. It should be noted that students who are in the current grade seven did have the extended block in grade six, so no student data used for the purpose of this study was impacted, while there is a potential impact if the team teaching approach was considered for future use. Additionally, in one school the team teaching approach was only being used in grade seven as the reading needs in grade eight did not support running a double block of Ela with two teachers. Students who met the

criteria in this school were taught in a typical one period Ela block and being seen for additional reading support with the reading teacher in isolation of the Ela block.

Summary of Findings

In summary the thick data collected throughout all phases of the action research provided the researcher truncated themes used to create and deliver targeted professional learning to the Ela department and to team teachers. The professional learning sessions were an iteration of the professional learning cycles provided to all teachers in the Ela department. As a result of the professional learning sessions team teachers committed to using varied instructional methods in order to deliver the instruction within the team teaching classes. Three methods of instructional techniques were used with the most frequency: station teaching, alternative teaching, and parallel teaching (Friend, 2008). Through varied feedback team teachers indicated a desire to further identify alternative methods of best organizing and planning their instructional time during the team taught instructional block. Several overarching themes emerged from the data collection. Themes included: the support provided to adolescents through team teaching, the importance of collaboration and planning across team teachers, strengthening the collective expertise of both the reading teachers and the Ela teachers, and developing coherence between instructional and assessment practices.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Action Research: Research Questions

1.) Based on data gathered in the pilot year of the team taught push in reading intervention model, what are the teachers and administrations perceptions of the strengths and areas of needed professional growth?

2.) What are the advantages or limitations of team teaching as an approach to middle school intervention?

As the nature of a qualitative study is also somewhat emergent, ongoing qualitative data was collected and analyzed as needed in order to "learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain the information" (Creswell, 2012, pp. 175-176). The data analysis provided the researcher opportunities to be creative and innovative as indicated in the tiered approach to professional development offered in Phase II of the action research cycle (Greene, 2007). Qualitative data analysis was exploratory in nature, as the open-ended research questions and survey results were coded, analyzed, and truncated into possible themes. The major themes from the pilot teacher survey included: roles and responsibilities of team teachers, how to plan for both curriculum and intervention, how to use varying teaching techniques as a team, and how to manage classroom instruction as a team. The major themes of the administrative interviews included: evidence of collaboration and the importance of relationships, data use and planning practices, needed work in differentiated instruction, emergent connections to the shifts made in Ela, and the needs of team teachers. The truncated themes used to professional learning cycles in Phase II included: using data to better design and implement targeted instruction that focus on transfer and generalizability (strategies, skills, and

processes), and the roles and responsibilities of team teachers. The major themes of the Phase II professional learning cycles included: teachers gaining common language for teaching techniques through a common frame of reference, data used to set student goals within a concept based instructional model that focus on skills and strategies and balancing an instructional plan between core instruction and intervention, time to plan and design the work as a team and as a grade level was beneficial.

Push In Team Teaching Model Supports the Needs of Adolescent Learners

An overarching theme from the open-ended administration interview included that administration felt that the model was working for students who needed extended time in Ela and reading interventions. All administration noted that they see students reading more volume of texts in class and varied types of texts in class. Administration also noted that additional time in Ela would benefit most students in the middle school and that the schedule needs to be considered further in order to give students additional time in English language arts. Administration also shared that in each building there were additional supports being put in place in order to strengthen students' literacy skills including push in support during content area classes when reading teachers were available within the schedule. One school reported that the pilot year worked so well for students in grade seven that there were not enough students to run a full grade 8 extended block in the second year. An alternative method of intervention was used for students who still needed additional reading support in grade eight. Instead one school was having some students attend the core Ela instruction and work in an additional reading block with the reading teacher beyond the Ela class period. Administration articulated that they supported seeing students reading in class as students need practice working within text and some reported support for students to be reading either in small groups (book clubs or literature

circles) or independently. All administration interviews showed evidence that administration had positive feelings about with what they saw in the push in team teaching model and they felt that through multiple observations that the push in team teaching model was meeting the needs of students in the classrooms.

Data across the study revealed major themes around the team taught push in intervention model which included: the unique needs of team teachers including planning, the roles and responsibilities of the team teachers, data driven instructional planning within a concept based curriculum, next phases of work on differentiation within Ela and reading classes, and small group design and implementation. Conclusions drawn at the end of data analysis lie in the interpretations and inferences of the researcher as she engages in the analysis procedures and the researcher organized the implications by theme (Greene, 2007).

Team Teaching Collaboration and Planning

When two teachers collaborate in a team, in this case an Ela teacher and a reading teaching using the common lens and background in strengthening literacy, the two lenses of the reading interventionist and the Ela teacher may produce powerful planning and instruction for the reticent adolescent learner. Between two teachers in a communal setting they could target students' reading deficits through delivering reading intervention and maintain the rigorous demands of the Common Core State Standards (2010). Teachers working in tandem offer a greater opportunity to target students who need specific work with a strategy or skill, as the reading teacher is the expert on how to deliver differentiated reading instruction to students who are performing below grade level. Based on the results of the study the recommendation is that Ela teachers and reading teachers continue to set goals for students who are reading below grade level and both the Ela and reading teacher take responsibility to work to meet those goals

through targeted instructional practices within the Ela classroom. Another recommendation is for administration to continue to support teaming whenever it is possible. Students should be seen in small groups to target their needed skills. There needs to be time for students to apply and practice those skills within the context of the core curriculum. Progress monitoring and assessment should be a shared responsibility between the Ela teacher and reading teacher whenever possible and goals should be revised on a regular basis.

Additional Skills Fostered in the Team Teaching Model

Building a Bridge

During the pilot of the team taught push in reading intervention model, the reading teacher had direct contact with the student as they are navigating the texts and work to help student transfer the valuable strategies employed during the small group intervention to authentic engaged learning and extended practice within the Ela block. This bridge may sound simplistic, but it is a missing factor in many support models as the traditional schedule does not always allow for Ela teachers and reading teachers to meet regularly. Additionally, the needs and motivations of the adolescent must be considered when designing an intervention approach. In order for students to generalize what they learn in intervention deeper into their learning practices, students need to practice this work in context, not just within a quick half hour intervention block. Students need expert teachers (both Ela and reading) to work collaboratively on articulated goals to move student achievement. Expert teachers are needed to support readers in their efforts to move the intervention practice to actual work within the classroom (Allington, 2013). Additionally, team teachers expressed that through their collaboration and teaming they continue to learn strategies that they had not known when working in isolation. While significant efforts have been made in the areas of content area literacy and disciplinary literacy, additional

research may be necessary to incorporate consistent reading strategies into other content area classes (Guthrie et al.,1997; Guthrie et al., 2013; Ho & Guthrie, 2013) and to find other ways to make reading goals transcend the walls of content area instruction. A reading teacher could be the bridge that crosses the caverns between secondary classrooms creating higher levels of both vertical and horizontal support.

During Professional Learning Session 4 and Professional Learning Cycle 5, both Ela and reading teachers came together to further collaborate cross district to share their practices in the team taught push in classrooms. Additionally, teachers expressed on various surveys and during professional learning sessions that students need to continue to receive targeted intervention within the double English language arts block. Also, teachers expressed that through their team teaching, they felt more confident in their ability to deliver both direct reading instruction and working within the updated English language arts curriculum. A few teachers noted that they still needed additional time to continue to learn from each other. The opportunity within the team teaching pilot was that the work of the student within small group intervention was then anchored to classroom instruction where both teachers progress monitored student growth, shared data, and worked to target students' reading goals. The work of both the reading teacher and Ela teacher was synchronized because students were expected to apply the strategies immediately to authentic tasks and not have to attempt to navigate between different classroom expectations, shifting gears between the different "balkanized domains" (RAND, 2002). Additionally, Ela and reading teachers worked together to explicitly teach the concepts, skills, and strategies necessary to engage in all of the processes of English language arts (Lanning, 2013) that could potentially be transferred to multiple content areas (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Additionally, teachers were able to provide more time for independent reading and book club

discussions because there was additional consistent time every day to progress monitor students and work within small groups.

Teachers expressed that students had more confidence in class and were spending more time engaged in targeted reading tasks or independent reading work. Beyond teachers' need to feel efficacious are students who are in need of advanced forms of literacy intervention. Multiple studies tie reader efficacy to long- term success both in secondary education and beyond (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015; RAND, 2002). The work of the reading team and interventions could have remained untouched, as the department had undertaken a huge curricular and conceptual shift. With the shifting approach to literacy instruction within core Ela instruction, the balkanized domains of instruction between reading intervention and core Ela instruction would have grown further apart (Mentis et al., 2008). While this research did not focus on teacher or group efficacy, the lens of social cognitive theory and transformative learning theory supports the use of participatory action research to grow and sustain long term changes (Mezirow et al., 2009), and the concepts behind participatory action research do lend to a possible connection between teachers growing in their confidence to teach reading and teachers transitioning to a less controlled more student centered approach to teaching Ela. Therefore a recommendation for further research includes a collective efficacy study for team teachers. Additionally, there is an opportunity to do action research around planning practices between reading teachers and Ela teachers who are not in a team teaching scenario as districts will need to consider multiple methods of intervention delivery as full team teaching may not always be optimal. Action research could include methods for Ela teachers to work more effectively in Tier 2 small group work within the core Ela classroom that focuses on more discreet skills of the reading and writing process.

Change, Human Capital, and Collective Expertise

Additionally, the design of the team teaching model was based on change principles similar to that outlined in the work of Newman et al. (2000) around the capacity of change. Teachers were working with a new curriculum, had new materials, were being challenged to update teaching practices, and had to find ways to build program coherence both vertically and horizontally. The pilot push in team teaching model challenged the status quo of how some reading intervention had been delivered in the past at least within this school district. Change is only as good as a systems ability to sustain it; Fullan (2016) states "building capacity is a key lever for change. It needs a clear focus connected to student learning, effective practices, and sustained cycles of learning" (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 31). By working in collaboration with building leadership, central office leadership, and teacher teams, professional learning and support can nurture change. Recognizing the conditions for change are also critical to a leader's ability to implement and sustain change. While the Ela department in this school district had undergone significant changes to the expectations to instruction and to the curriculum modifications shifting to a concept based instructional model, the ground was fertile to also change the approach to reading intervention.

Changes made within the English language arts curriculum encouraged teachers to plan instruction that used varied texts at varied levels of complexity in varied ways. In order to build literacy strength, students should engage in critically reading and analyzing texts that are a mix of their independent reading level or at and above grade level. The professional learning cycle feedback indicated that teachers need more time to plan and work on their work within the classroom. Data indicated that when given time to learn a new concept (team teaching instructional strategies) time to plan the work with a unit of study and time to reflect on the

implementation, teachers engaged in new practices that they hadn't found on their own within the team teaching model. All teachers tried or planned to use one of the six team teaching models, and also found that having the vocabulary around the team teaching instructional models was helpful to them in their planning.

Additionally, teachers continue to look for tools to help them stay organized and be more effective in their instruction. Teacher planning should include direct instruction using varied reading strategies though both guided practice and modeling and then opportunities for students to use those skills in an authentic setting independently. The full team professional learning on the demonstration notebook gave teachers a tool to teach into smaller skills within the Ela units of study (Roberts & Roberts, 2016). Ela teachers are experts at critically reading and analyzing literature, and this tool may help them be mindful of the skills necessary to teach the struggling or reluctant adolescent reader in a more systematic and consistent way.

Additionally, educational leadership needs to continue to challenge the state of curriculum documents and the implementation of standards in secondary classrooms as the curriculum and units of study need to shift in order to meet the demands of the CCSS (2010). If a curriculum or instructional frame does not encourage student choice to find texts that are both high interest and motivational and the schedule does not allow for students to engage in reading those texts or to receive additional targeted instruction, the opportunity to build reading stamina and strength is diminished. This must be a growing priority for secondary leadership. Reading is a habit, and for some, a way of life. If students fall out of the habit, their chances of becoming disenfranchised increase and the results of that are well documented through empirical research studies. An additional recommendation is to further consider the use of text structure and genre in the middle grades as a way to organize concepts within Ela units of study. Readers need direct

instruction on how to understand the structure of a text or a genre (CCSS, 2010), and this work must be done in attending to longer complex texts through sustained practice. It is through the recognition of text structures and genre characteristics that readers can build information onto structures across multiple texts, thereby giving them a foundation on which to read more complex texts (CCSS, 2010; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Short articles and abbreviated texts may be good for some analysis work, however, students must also be able to navigate longer pieces of text and read across them and between multiple texts to develop complex ideas and themes (Calkins et al., 2012). Students use their reading work to build ideas, and use their written response to document and expand these ideas. The relationship between the two demonstrates the direct reciprocity between a student's written response and a student's ability to analyze and synthesize varied texts (Calkins et al., 2012).

Further work should be completed in the connectivity of reading and writing within the team taught classes and other content areas. Respectively all teachers need work in how written response could be used as a method to deepen the impact of reading interventions. This work could transcend all content classroom areas as these increased expectations are supported through the Common Core State Standards, as expectations include students moving beyond persuasive writing using made up quotes from fictitious people to students being expected to make an organized argument that includes analyzing multiple sources to find strong evidence from text and use it to support their claims (Calkins et al., 2012). Without this opportunity to work this into an authentic and engaged learning environment, the work of reading may not move beyond the decoding and basic comprehension of texts. There are rich opportunities to do this kind of reading and responding within the Ela classroom, and additionally teachers can gain further access into student thinking about reading as within the secondary Ela classroom, much

emphasis is placed on written response around text. Written response is a key component of how students demonstrate reading comprehension and analysis and this information could be helpful to helping team teachers identify next stages of work for students within small group interventions. To meet this challenge, educators need to consider multiple methods of how to shift the instructional model of English language arts and the design of reading interventions further.

Innovation may be difficult, but students should come before schedules

The pilot study of the team teaching push in intervention model was not intended to be a perfect solution for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention work. Instead, the pilot was implemented to strengthen the alignment of the work of the reading intervention to the work of the Ela classroom and to improve practices both within core Ela instruction and to tie intervention practices to core academic work. Additionally, the team teaching push in intervention model created an alternative learning environment where students benefited from additional time and practice working in high interest texts with two teachers who would be able to meet their needs and to collaborate on lesson design and implementation. Further research may indicate that by working intimately in teams, there is no denying or "dodging" changes that need to be made to address the needs of struggling readers as two teachers with two different levels of expertise are working in collaboration to meet those students learning goals. Even within the discipline of Ela there could be a perceived competition with the needs of the reading teacher, as though the content areas are complementary, in the pull out model, those goals were not directly aligned, observed, shared and discussed on a daily basis. Recommendations include that school leaders challenge the constructs of schedules especially in the secondary level. The system of instruction should be designed to meet the needs of the students, and scheduling should not determine the design of the

instruction. Schools and school systems need to create data reviews and placement processes that are responsive to the goals of student learning. The need for flexibility of staffing and schedule gets more complex in the secondary school setting, however, it will take administration's creative vision to create classes and opportunities within the confines of a schedule that meet the needs of adolescent students within the school.

English Language Arts is a Content Area Too

Also, with the shifts in the Ela curriculum, it became evident that Ela teachers need additional professional learning about the methods that best served the adolescent reader, and how to further support readers during the core Ela instructional block. Secondary teachers will continue to find innovative ways to implement a standards based approach to instruction and assessment. While reading proficiency has always been the goal, the methods of achieving that goal have shifted as reading proficiency has been redefined. English language arts is responsible for a multitude of skills and strategies, and the increasing demands continue to increase the pressure on this content area. As the changes to the curriculum and units of study shift to the rigorous demands of the CCSS (2010), the expectations on content area teachers continue to shift, and the learning necessary to support these changes needs to come through an authentic and engaging professional learning plan. The recommendation is that schools and districts create a cohesive learning plan that is differentiated in design. Too often time constraints control the design and delivery of professional learning. Similar to the needs of a classroom, schools need varied levels of professional learning. It will take the dedication and innovation of administrators at both the central office and school based level to create a coherent and meaningful professional learning plan that gives teachers the autonomy and the support to meet their professional learning

needs. Alignment through vertical and horizontal articulation and coherence are not the same concept and one should not outweigh the other.

Coherence and the Through Line

Administration's responses during the interview process included next steps of work including growing the other content areas in the areas of literacy. When the work of the Ela teachers and reading teachers is elevated it may have additional implications across classrooms, as literacy is a core skill needed to access all content. Additionally, administration in secondary schools needs ongoing support in content area best practices, as their work is vast within a secondary school setting. The researcher also began meeting regularly after professional learning sessions with the middle school administration team in order to debrief professional learning sessions and tie the work back to the goals of building leadership.

Recommendations for Further Study

Suggested future work for Team Teachers

Another phase of participatory action research should be conducted to further hone the discreet reading instructional skills needed to effectively balance core instruction and intervention. Some data indicated that teachers felt more confident in their work both as an Ela teacher and as a reading teacher which encourages the idea of further participatory action research as "par (participatory action research) holds great promise for a practice- based program aimed at enhancing educational leadership and educational reform" (Mezirow et al., 2009). Additionally, some data indicated that administration was pleased with the results of the push in team teaching model. This type of iterative research design can assist districts when trying to implement innovation. It is through the history of our choices that we identify our current

conditions. The research work of this dissertation has further to reach, as the secondary school model must find appropriate ways to shift from traditional approaches to intervention practices.

Next phases of the work may include further researching the phenomenon of team teaching as it applies to other disciplines. This work could mirror that of collaborative inquiry in action using the participatory action research as a starting point (Mezirow et al., 2009). Teachers have become more proficient in identifying what specific skills students need to work on both in a small group and also within the core Ela instructional block, and that work needs to continue to grow for all secondary Ela teachers and teachers within other disciplines. Teachers in the Ela extended block have extended their assessment suite for students in the extended block. All students take the NWEA MAP assessment as a district benchmark, all students are given the GRADE assessment at the beginning and end of the school year, and students in the extended block are also administered the BAS (Benchmark Assessment System level 2) assessment to better identify what areas of reading they should concentrate on within small group work. The work of Dieker and Little (2005) suggests a need "for a stronger collaborative infrastructure" and the reading teacher could serve as the link between content area classes. Students who need reading intervention may or may not be identified as having special needs, so students may or may not have an adult who is monitoring their progress across classes. As students move from the one room school house of elementary to the balkanized domains of the secondary world, the ability to get lost or to slip under the radar increases. An idea for further research and exploration are the systems that school leaders put in place to progress monitor not only across the school year but across the school day. Without a liaison working to pull the work together, students are left to navigate varied classroom protocols and expectations on their own. Educational leadership needs to recognize that this work takes time and give reading specialists, literacy coaches, or

reading interventionists the opportunity to be the bridge between classes and work with more teachers to provide literacy instruction within the classroom. The literacy coach, consultant, or reading teacher could be employed to monitor not only student progress in reading and Ela, but how students are navigating core classroom work as well. If students had a time built into their day to meet with a mentor or a reading specialist who served almost as a case manager, there may be an opportunity to build bridges between classroom instruction. Additionally, within middle schools teams need to continue to employ methods of sharing and planning for students across the day and reading teachers could be a strong conduit for the necessary conductivity for the most struggling readers. Further work with teachers includes continuing to gather and analyze data on the effectiveness of the team teaching push in model and to review student progress as they continue their educational journey into the high school. Also, the researcher would suggest that additional observational data should be gathered and analyzed. This data could include informal observational data conducted with administration though informal walk throughs. Literacy coaches and coaching could also extend this research. The researcher would suggest working with literacy coaches or other reading consultants to build their knowledge base around the strategies used during the team teaching model and having the literacy coaches push in and observe team teaching. The researcher would advocate for additional self-reflection for the team teachers. A possible next step may include recording team teachers' inclusive lessons and analyzing the instructional moves with team teachers. Additionally, the researcher would complete an evaluation survey that asks Ela teachers, reading teachers, and literacy coaches to give further feedback on the connectivity of the curricular shifts and further differentiated instruction for all students. This could promote additional opportunities for reading teachers and Ela teachers to work at higher levels of capacity cross disciplinary throughout the entire school

day, breaking down additional barriers between instructional practices in the middle school core instruction and increase teachers ability to apply a literacy lens across an adolescent's entire school day.

Possible next stages of work for Administration

A second round of interviews with administration would have added to the research. Additionally, the researcher would conduct a professional learning session for administration on the instructional methods of team teaching. The researcher would also suggest that the administration create a list of best practices to look for within the team teaching model to help guide feedback within the team teaching classes. During the interviews two administrators mentioned a creating a literacy data team that would meet more regularly. Next steps of the work may include helping administration coordinate the efforts of not only the push in team teaching intervention model, but also identify next steps for students who do not fit within the criteria of the model through alternative scheduling in order to develop more time for reading and writing practice. Next steps also include how to grow the collaborative efforts of the team teachers into other content area classrooms. The administration may want to consider alternative assignments for the literacy coaches that include some elements of team teaching while still allowing them to coach into classrooms. Administration should continue to explore opportunities to bridge the work between buildings and between central office and building leadership, seeking to improve practices for all students and build innovative approaches to scheduling and student support for students who need additional support in reading and writing.

CHAPTER 6 ETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTION

Ethnographic Reflection: Research Questions

1.) How might action research be used to inspire large scale transformation in a school district?

2.) How has action research impacted the researcher as an educational leader?

Data analysis and researcher reflection occurred during all phases of the action research design. The researcher continually sought thick data in order to establish dependability and authenticity (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Data were culled from several sources and from several individuals in the district being studied including administration and teachers. Data collected from teachers came in several forms, including anonymous surveys, and feedback forms. The researcher also used feedback gathered from the district level across all Ela and reading teachers from the full professional developments offered. The researcher was able to us what Creswell (2012) defines as a zig zag approach as is found within an emerging grounded theoretical design, as the researcher toggled back and forth between varied stakeholders to further refine and expand the thinking about next phases of work within the Ela department and the work specified to the team teachers being used in this action research. The researcher coded and reflected and adjusted the scope of the research checking and rechecking identified themes from different feedback received during different phases of the study. The practice of continued reflection is within the scope of the researcher's position within the district, therefore action research allowed for this level of reflection as the action research continued to change and grow. The researcher used initial codes and developed themes that guided the work of the professional learning. The overarching theme was to refine the push in team taught classes to reflect higher levels of

differentiation, student choice, and to build bridges between intervention and core instruction (roles and responsibilities). These themes were transformed into pedagogical skills necessary to improve the identified themes: data driven differentiated instructional planning; types of team teaching instructional methods; refining the use of concept based curriculum to drive the processes of Ela instructional practices. The axial code, or phenomenon that positioned its priority used to drive the remainder of the professional development was shifting team teacher planning to be responsive to students needs through goal setting and using a variety of team teaching strategies within the concept based units of study, which in turn supports the work of a balanced instructional core (City et al., 2009; Creswell, 2012). As stated by City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2009) the instructional core is about the balance between the student, the teacher, and the content this is what creates coherence between curriculum, pedagogy, student work or student achievement. This is unique for the push in team teachers as their teaching situation allowed for differentiated layers of support and scaffolding within each extended class. The Ela department had undergone significant changes, and in education sometimes the pacing of change is slowed down to be completed piece by piece. In this action research, all elements shifted simultaneously as the belief is that the work of both intervention and core instruction should be synergistic and the goals for students should be shared.

Professional learning is not one size fits all and building a common language matters. Survey data and administration's interview data indicated that teachers needed to learn about the additional methods and variety of team teaching strategies. The researcher continued to make decisions about the categories throughout the study as the recursive nature of action research which supported the researcher's constructivist role within the later phases of the action research cycle (Creswell, 2012). Included in that was direct instruction, however it was the timing of the

direct instruction that was unique. Some members of the teaching team had attended professional learning at the beginning of the pilot that reviewed the elements of team teaching and the concepts. These concepts had somewhat emerged as there was evidence from both the teacher surveys and the administrator's responses. The teachers in PL 5 expressed that the ease of implementation of the strategies was immediate as they felt they had already been doing one form of the team teaching at one point or another. The change that occurred is now the teachers use the method of delivery consistent with the desired outcome. Small group work just to work in small groups is not the idea, instead, the end has to justify the means. Additionally, using data has become common phrasing in education. Data gives teachers information to be responsive in design and implementation of practices. The shift is still necessary to move from increasing data scores, to using the data to improve student performance that may result ideally in some form of increased student performance on standardized tests.

Within an educational infrastructure in the era of continual school reform teachers and administration need to continually pursue aspects of qualitative research through action research to recognize and promote innovation to promote continual improvement, as it is only through close proximity, ongoing discussions, and frequent data review of student data and teacher data that long lasting educational changes can sustain within a moving breathing organization. It is through the collaboration and teamwork of central office, building administration, and teachers that leaders can choose and execute high impact reform initiatives that will address deficits and promote a strong student centered culture of improvement (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2013). Haergraves and Fullan (2012) state "collaborative cultures don't happen by themselves. Some deliberate or even required arrangement is usually necessary in establishing them" (p. 118). Collaboration amongst team teachers has started because there was an "arranged collegiality"

(Haergraves and Fullan, 2012, p. 118). That is not to say that Ela and reading teachers did not want to work together, they just didn't have an ongoing opportunity or a concrete purpose or common conceptual frame for collaboration. Even with the encouraged conditions of team teaching, the team teachers planning time and temperance vacillated between teams and between schools. Additionally, administration agreed that team teachers need planning time in order to be most effective. Continuing to grow collaborative practices will be an important next phase to this work, and may take working directly with the building principals to grow the model of team teaching to cross disciplinary teams.

Educational leadership can be difficult in the changing tides but the collective goal remains the same; leaders continue to search for innovative ways to better meet the needs of their students. In order to accomplish this and sustain the change, leaders must also continue to look for ways to support teachers to grow in praxis and stretch their professional capacity. Action research allows the researcher to conduct meaningful educational research, by actively reviewing and documenting their own work, learning, reflecting, and make progress along with recognizing the struggles, the realities, and the setbacks. The importance of the action research frame is that it builds an iterative connection between the work of professional learning, the changes in the curriculum, and promotes ongoing reflection at each stage of the work as the work strives to create a more collaborative effort to improve the learning community through targeted investigation and action (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Tuckman & Harper, 2012) In the past ten years educational reform keeps shifting and moving. The needs of students in the near future are vastly undetermined and underestimated. The growing pressures of accountability, pending privatization of public school opportunities and the onslaught of pressures placed on public school educators has become staggering. A recent article published by Zhao (2017) discusses the

comparisons of the medical model and education. As a social system, educators have become more proficient of using the medical model as a learning point for our own systemic efforts. The medical model spurred our work with walkthroughs, comparable to doctor rounds. The medical model inspired professional learning communities, perhaps inspired by professional medical boards that review cases and work in collaboration with experts in varied fields. Zhao (2017) refers to us considering the side effects component of the medical model. If a patient takes too much aspirin, he would indeed get sicker. If he or she takes the correct dose he or she may feel relief. In terms of education, how can we consider the side effects of the "medicine" or "treatment" that we give our students? By continuing to allow the schedules in secondary schools to drive what we are doing to meet the needs of our students we lose the impact of the treatment. If we do not continue to team with a group of professionals around the symptoms, we could continue to prescribe interventions that are not targeting the problem, but could in fact be reinforcing negative self-efficacy and students' poor self-image as readers.

The qualitative action research model is a possibility for other educators in other systems. Action research goes beyond knowledge acquisition but moves to growing something, moves to strengthening participants, is organic and close and complex (Herr & Anderson, 2015). By closely studying what a district is trying to accomplish both at the system level to the student level and from the student level up to the system level middle school and high school educators need to continue to grow our thinking around the needs of an adolescent who won't read or can't read well. It is not too late. Adolescents readers are worth the efforts and the deep rooted commitment necessary to help students find that inner voice that whispers, *keep reading* there is an adventure beyond those pages, there is information you might need here, ***keep reading***. We need to continue to assure teachers there are proven methods that teachers can help the struggling

adolescent reader, to find what truly motivates them, and through strong literacy learning unlock unimaginable possibilities for students both intellectually and financially. Students also need to be reinforced in their efforts to read what is interesting to them, to find their passion, to understand and appreciate the value of reading and to learn the strategies necessary for them to navigate information about the world they are living in (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014).

The concept of capacity building in the efforts of growing staff is intriguing. By working in teams, teachers have the opportunity to continually check their own practices with that of a colleague. Fullan and Quinn (2016) state: "capacity building impacts the organization because it develops the culture; accelerates the speed of change; fosters sustainability, and reinforces the strategy as people become involved in deeper learning, reflection, and problem solving across an organization" (p. 58). This work moves the depth of the learning from professional development sessions form a topical base exposure to a belief system within an organization (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Further exploration of the team teaching push in model may include the depths of the collaborative process through the lens of co-constructivism and the team teaching model's long term impacts on teacher's individual and collective efficacy.

Further Recommendations

In research, the practitioner has to "start with something" and put the action into the action research (Lapan et al., 2012). The researcher made every effort to focus this longitudinal action research on focused elements, but the work of an organization continues to be complex. The researcher asks the question, "Are the findings really meaningful to the professional in a way that makes them useful for change and improvement?" (Lapan et al., 2012). The good work of education should feel somewhat never ending, as the needs of students, the demands of society, and the targets always seem to be shifting and evolving. The research of this action

research reinforced for the researcher that good work is both comprehensive and details oriented. That the work within a school district needs to be investigative, that the hours spent closely studying the district and the data through a complimentary lens provides leaders with a stronger base to make informed decisions. Also, educational researchers need to continue to challenge the temptation of a quick reaction or a quick fix in every situation. When decisions can be made to strengthen a program across a school system, all students' experiences within that system increase. This research could have gone on and on as the purpose of action research is to improve local practice, and there is always space for reflection and refinement.

Due to time constraints, the researcher did not interview the administration a second time to discuss how the team teachers' practices have shifted, however periodic observational data will continue to be reviewed. Additionally, student voice will matter in determining the effectiveness of this intervention. The action research frame needed to remain manageable (Clauset et al., 2008), and as a result anecdotal student data was not included in this report. Districts who consider doing this level of action research may consider gathering student feedback in the form of survey, motivational scales, or interview if appropriate to the constraints and design of the research. Additionally, this level of system reform is highly complex. Moving parts of staffing, administration's priorities within a building, and teacher efficacy and willingness influenced the scope and sequence of this research as school systems are highly complex organizations (Fullan, 2009).

The last phases of research indicated that there are additional steps that may be necessary to continue to support the team taught configuration. At the final meeting in the action research cycle the team teachers started to explore what should be happening in our work with students every day and what are the roadblocks that stop us from doing the work of team teaching. This

bend on the research could move into a collaborative inquiry cycle within the action research as the team teachers have evolved into their own professional learning community that has a "mutually compelling interest" that could further inspire team teachers to explore their own belief systems around the needs and motivations of adolescent readers (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 255). Some questions that stemmed from the data review may include: Within a class, how can teachers create additional progress monitoring tools to be used during push in intervention? How can we increase teachers' ability to prioritize within a block of instructional time? What do students find motivating around this type of Ela/ reading class experience? Extending the impacts of this research may also be beneficial to the district: How can the district grow this level of collaboration beyond the Ela and reading for all students? How do students who participate in the team taught classroom sustain their success once they attend high school?

As a research frame, educational leadership may want to consider this level of action research which included a hybrid of retrospective review and an intervention of professional development through action research as a viable approach to district level leadership. Systems thinking and the way in which a school system needs to grow in its interdependence as a greater system is challenging, as the larger journey depends on the efficacy and capacity of the individual classroom units. Fullan (2009) discusses building a culture for learning, including that knowledge sharing is a lever for change. In this longitudinal qualitative approach, careful consideration was taken in order to plan for and implement a wide level, deep and sustainable change as educational systems are interdependent. The instructional leader also has to be willing to change and be brave in the pursuit of breaking status quo. If this collaborative team teaching push in work continues to grow, the push in model may extinguish itself, as all students will be working within a just right book within a concept that is broad enough for them to be able to

attach any level of text to it in the secondary level. This kind of change can be difficult when logistics of scheduling and past practice and tradition often takes priority. The researcher anticipates the next levels of the action research needed will include continuing to grow all teachers ability to respond to students learning needs especially in the area of literacy, as with the skills of reading, writing, and communication, the global, national, and local pathways of opportunity within the 21st century expand immediately and exponentially. Leaders, including the researcher- administrator, need to continue to build bridges between the traditional separated domains of instruction in order to best serve the students in our care. Educational practices will evolve if energy and time are dedicated to constant reflection and revision, to the deep commitment of putting students' needs first, and by building a collegial and collaborative culture that bridges our collective work and creates coherence within our instructional systems.

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APPENDIX A: ANONYMOUS TEACHER SURVEY QUESTIONS

2015-2016 End of the Year Pilot Survey Questions:

Team teaching Push In Double Ela block

1. How would you describe the purpose of the push in team teaching double Ela block?

2. When you started team teaching, did you have any concerns? If so, what were they?

3. On a scale of 1-7 (1 being lowest and 7 being highest) which instructional strategy does your team use the most?

_____ One teacher teaches, one observes and/or takes data

_____ Station Teaching: Teachers divide content and students. Teacher works at a "station" with a small group and then the students move. Teacher works at the same "station" with another set of students.

_____ Parallel Teaching: Teachers are both teaching the same information with divided groups

_____ Alternative Teaching: One teacher takes responsibility for a large group and the other works with a smaller group

_____ Teaming: Both teachers are delivering the same instruction to the whole class

_____ One Teach, One Assist: One teacher is the primary and the other teacher works unobtrusively with students

_____ Other: Please describe_____

4. How would you describe how your team worked together to implement the new Ela units of study?

5. Describe how reading interventions were delivered in the team teaching push in intervention model.

6. Describe how your team measured student growth.

7. How frequently do you and your team teacher plan together?

___ Every day

___ Every other day

___ Twice a week

___ Once a week

___ Once every other week

8. During your planning sessions with your team teacher, what were your main topics of discussion?

9. Please share anything that you learned about yourself professionally as a result of being a part of the team teaching model.

10. How can the district support your professional growth in terms of the team teaching push in intervention model?

11. What changes could/should be made to the push in team teaching model in grades 7/ 8?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the push in team teaching model?

Appendix B

ADMINISTRATION: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-structured interview question guide for Administrative Interviews

School: A B C

Role: Principal Assistant Principal

Date:

1. What does strong literacy instruction for students in your school look like to you?
2. After year one of the team taught push in intervention model, what are your thoughts?
3. What do you think were the strengths of the push in team teaching intervention model?
4. Follow up: how can we grow these strengths further?
5. During your observations both formal and informal, what types of instructional techniques did you see used in the Ela double classroom?
6. What types of instructional techniques do you think the team teachers could use more frequently?
7. What do you think are potential areas for additional professional learning and coaching support for this next school year within Ela and the team taught classes?
8. How do your teachers learn best? What might be the best way to meet their professional learning needs?
9. Are there any areas of literacy instruction you would like to learn more about?
10. Are there any aspects of team teaching you would like to learn more about?
11. What are your thoughts about the curriculum and instructional shifts made in Ela over the past few years?
12. Did these shifts support the push in team teaching model?
13. Do you have any other thoughts or questions?

APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF PERMISSION
LETTER FROM RESEARCHER TO SUPERINTENDENT
LETTER TO MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Appendix C:

May 12, 2016

RE: Dissertation

Dear Superintendent of School District,

In the past few years our district has focused on maximizing the impact of our literacy instruction and our reading interventions. Through our collective work as an administrative team, our school system has shifted towards a student centered instructional approach to teaching and learning. I am excited to study how middle school English language arts and reading teachers perceive the current practices in place and the team teaching push in model and identify how we are best supporting the needs of our struggling seventh and eighth grade readers.

My proposal includes a three phase phenomenological case study. Phase I of the case study will be conducted to review past practice of reading intervention in the school system. Phase II will include English language arts teachers and reading teachers giving anonymous feedback regarding their perceptions of the team teaching pilot year. Approximately eight teachers will reflect on the process of team teaching and using push in intervention. Additionally middle school administration may be interviewed regarding their perceptions of the pilot year of push in team teaching for reading intervention. Phase III may include a professional learning module in the team teaching structure to support areas of need identified through the anonymous survey. During all phases of the case study all data will be kept anonymous and during Phase 3 participation in professional coaching will be voluntary.

For my dissertation research I seek your support in conducting an analysis of our team taught reading intervention model in grades 7 and 8. My hope is that this research will inform our local practices, further our knowledge of middle school reading intervention, and potentially inspire other districts to consider alternative models for middle school reading instruction.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Sinal Swingler

Appendix C: Letter to Middle School Principals

May 27, 2016

RE: Dissertation

Dear Middle School Principal,

In the past few years our district has concentrated on maximizing the impact of reading intervention. Through our collective work as an administrative team, our school system has shifted towards a student centered instructional approach to teaching and learning. I am excited to study how middle school English Language arts and Reading teachers perceive the current instructional supports for our struggling readers in grades 7 and 8.

My proposal includes a three phase phenomenological case study. Phase I of the case study will be conducted to review past practice of reading intervention in the school system. Phase II will include English Language Arts teachers and Reading teachers giving anonymous feedback regarding their perceptions of the team teaching pilot year. Approximately eight teachers will reflect on the process of team teaching and using push in intervention. Additionally middle school administration may be interviewed regarding their perceptions of the pilot year of push in team teaching for reading intervention. Phase III may potentially include a professional learning opportunity through coaching in the team teaching structure to support areas of need identified through the anonymous survey. During the case study all data will be kept anonymous and during Phase 3 participation in professional coaching will be voluntary.

For my dissertation research, I seek your support and input while conducting an analysis of our team taught reading intervention model in grades 7 and 8. My hope is that this research will inform our local practices and potentially inspire other districts to consider alternative ways to organize and deliver middle school reading intervention.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Sinal Swingler

APPENDIX D

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORMS

DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN FOR CONCEPT BASED UNIT OF STUDY

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FEEDBACK FORM

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FEEDBACK FORM

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRE- SURVEY

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POST-SURVEY

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOLLOW UP SESSION 5 FEEDBACK FORM

USING STUDENT DATA TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT A CONCEPT BASED UNIT OF STUDY

Step 1: Data Dive

Step 2: Review the Unit of Study and Texts and or Concepts within the unit of study

Step 3: Prioritize Student Needs-set goals with students (reading and writing)

Step 4: Design Instruction Opportunities: Small Groups,+ Learning Tasks and Evidence of Learning

Step 5: Create a Calendar

Step 6: Implement and Adjust

Step 7: Assess and Identify next steps

Teacher Data Driven Instructional Model Template

Teacher Graphic Organizer for Data Driven Instructional Design

Step 1: Data Dive

Data Review:	Students needing support: NWEA Literature NWEA Informational DCA- Whole class focus? Student FCAs? (Focus Correction Areas)

*Teachers should note students who score high in areas as well- how will students be supported?	Thinking Skills Other?

<u>Step 2: Review the Unit of Study (Concept or Genre)</u> and the varied texts (anchor texts, mentor texts, informational text, videos, book clubs)

What are the essential questions?
Are they essential questions?
Do we need to modify or adjust?

What are the key skills and concepts we need to cover within this unit?

- What does the text provide me for opportunities to teach deeper?
- Concept based unit- What nonfiction/ informational texts can I use?
- Genre unit- What do I know about the genre to teach deeper?

Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings	
Unit of Study/ NWEA Key Knowledge and Skills (Key Ideas and Details AND Craft and Structure)		
Concept Unit	Materials- Whole Class Experiences	Performance Task-
Anchor:	Mentor: Lexile: F/P	BC1 Lexile: F/P

BC 2 Lexile: F/ P	BC 3 Lexile: F/ P	BC 4 Lexile: F/ P

FOR TEACHER REFERENCE: LEXILE BANDS BY GRADE LEVEL (CCSS, 2010)

Grade Band	Current Lexile Band	"Stretch" Lexile Band*
K–1	**N/A**	**N/A**
2–3	**450L–730L**	**420L–820L**
4–5	**640L–850L**	**740L–1010L**
6–8	**860L–1010L**	**925L–1185L**
9-10	**960L–1120L**	**1050L–1335L**
11–CCR	**1070L–1220L**	**1185L–1385L**

Step 3: Prioritize Student Needs-Set goals with students (reading and writing)

What are the next steps of work for my readers?
What are my next steps of work for my writers?
Whole class- *Do 80% of students need this?*
- Book Clubs
- Strategy Group- groups of 5-6 (may need something different)
- Personalized Support Level (independent/ small group work time)

Individual needs within class- what strategies do we need for individual kids?

Step 4: Design Learning Tasks and Evidence of Learning

- What evidence do I need to see that my students "get it"?
- What is the design of the learning?

- How can I use book clubs to gather evidence?
- How can I use conferring to gather evidence?
- What resources do we have to support building personalized learning tasks?

What is the big learning at the end and how do I set them up for success and background knowledge necessary to accomplish this work?

Step 5: Create a Calendar

Step 6: Implement and Adjust

- Be flexible, as life happens
- Add/ Shift Mini Lessons
- Add some formative check ins
- Add small group work as needed

Step 7: Assess and Identify next steps

- Review of the performance task- what areas do my students need more work with?
- How did students' deep thinking get stronger?
- Did students show you high levels of thinking and have evidence of learning?

MS Professional Learning Feedback October, 2016

This feedback form is part of your professional responsibility, please take 5 minutes to fill in the questions below. Thank you in advance! Emails were collected as a portion of the feedback form.

What was your key take away from yesterday's meeting?

What did you accomplish as a result of today's data driven instructional design workshop?

On a scale of 1-5, how strong are you using the various data to plan whole group, small group, and individualized instruction?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Weak- I feel like the data is confusing.

I use NWEA and local data consistently to inform my instruction. I can teach others how to use it.

What professional work do you need to do in order to move your instruction to the next level?

What do you need to learn more about?

MS Professional Learning Feedback January 2017

*This form was electronically distributed to all teachers in the Ela and Reading department. Emails were collected as a portion of the feedback form.

This feedback form is part of your professional responsibility, please take 5 minutes to fill in the questions below.

Thank you in advance!

What were your key take aways from our meeting?

What did you accomplish as a result of today's work session?

What professional work do you need to do independently in order to move your instruction to the next level?

What do you need to learn more about?

What is the name of the professional text you shared with your colleagues today?

Any lingering questions?

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRE- SURVEY TEAM TEACHING

Pre Survey Questions include:
On a scale of 1-6 (1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest), how well do you understand the different team teaching instructional strategies?

Please circle your response below:

One Teach, One Observe

1 2 3 4 5 6

Station Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Parallel Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Alternative Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Teaming

1 2 3 4 5 6

One Teach, One Assist

1 2 3 4 5 6

How well do you understand how to use the Structure of Process with Ela?

1 2 3 4 5 6

How well do you understand the importance of schema and the idea of transfer of knowledge?

1 2 3 4 5 6

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POST SURVEY

Post Survey

On a scale of 1-6 (1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest), how well do you understand the different team teaching instructional strategies?

Please circle your response below:

One Teach, One Observe

1 2 3 4 5 6

Station Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Parallel Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Alternative Teaching

1 2 3 4 5 6

Teaming

1 2 3 4 5 6

One Teach, One Assist

1 2 3 4 5 6

After today's learning, which team teacher instructional strategies are you most likely to use more often? Please circle 1 or 2 strategies.

One Teach, One Observe
Station Teaching
Parallel Teaching
Alternative Teaching
Teaming

One Teach, One Assist

How well do you understand how to use the Structure of Process with Ela?

1 2 3 4 5 6

How well do you understand the importance of schema and the idea of transfer of knowledge?

1 2 3 4 5 6

What are the key learning points from today's learning session?

What are you most excited to implement in your team teaching instruction?

What new understandings did you gain about concept based curriculum and data driven instructional planning?

What lingering questions do you have?

TEAM TEACHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOLLOW UP SESSION 5 FEEDBACK FORM

Which two strategies did you say you would like to use more often in your class? Please circle 2.

One Teacher teaches, one teacher observes or takes data

Station Teaching: Teachers divide content and students. Teacher works at a "station" with a small group and then the students move. Teacher works at the same "station" with another set of students.

Parallel Teaching: Teachers are both teaching the same information with divided groups

Alternative Teaching: One teacher takes responsibility for a large group and the other works with a smaller group

Teaming: Both teachers are delivering the same instruction to the whole class

One Teach, One Assist: One teacher is the primary and the other teacher works unobtrusively with students

In the last 2 weeks since our professional learning, how many times have you used each of the team teacher instructional strategies? Please put a number next to each team teaching instructional strategy.
(Please concentrate on the last two weeks only)

____One Teacher teaches, one teacher observes or takes data

____Station Teaching: Teachers divide content and students. Teacher works at a "station" with a small group and then the students move. Teacher works at the same "station" with another set of students.

____Parallel Teaching: Teachers are both teaching the same information with divided groups

____Alternative Teaching: One teacher takes responsibility for a large group and the other works with a smaller group

____Teaming: Both teachers are delivering the same instruction to the whole class

____One Teach, One Assist: One teacher is the primary and the other teacher works unobtrusively with students

Did you use the team teaching instructional strategy you indicated that you wanted to use? How did it feel? What worked? What needs further work?

Did you use the team teaching instructional strategy you indicated that you wanted to use? If not, please explain why.

What would you like for the next steps of professional learning around team teaching? Please be specific.

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL
LETTER OR APPROVAL FROM SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

October 4, 2016

Ms. Jennifer Sinal
School of Education
University of Bridgeport

Dear Ms. Sinal:

On *October 3, 2016* a designated IRB member approved the following human subject research via expedited review:

Type of Review:	*Initial*
Project Title:	Making Meaning of Reading Intervention, a Case Study: Middle School Reading Instruction in 3 Middle Schools Using a Push In Team Teaching Intervention Model
Investigator:	Ms. Jennifer Sinal
IRB ID:	2016-10-01
Funding Agency:	*NA*
Grant Title:	*NA*
Grant ID:	*NA*
IND or IDE:	*NA*

Before October 3, 2017 or within 30 days of study close, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a completed "UB HRP-212 FORM: Continuing Review Progress Report" and required attachments to request continuing approval or study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of October 3, 2017, this research expires on that date.

In conducting this research you are required to follow the requirements listed in the *Investigator Manual*.

Sincerely,

Christine Hempowicz, Ed.D.
IRB Administrator

CC: Gail Prelli, Ed.D.
Thomas Christ, Ph.D.

126 Park Avenue • Bridgeport, CT 06604 • Tel: 203.576.4973 • E-mail: irb@bridgeport.edu

[redacted]

[redacted]
Superintendent of Schools
[redacted]

May 23, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

Jennifer Sinal Swingler, the Supervisor of English Language Arts in the [redacted] Public Schools, met with me on May 12, 2016 to share her dissertation topic, the research around which, she hopes will lead to a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Bridgeport. Ms. Sinal Swingler articulated her desire to complete a case study in our three middle schools, and as part of her dissertation research, to develop and assess a push-in team teaching intervention model in grades 7 and 8 English language arts. Ms. Sinal Swingler and I discussed her desire to use district information and data. She assured me that she will maintain confidentiality during the course of her research, including collecting data from anonymous teacher surveys, using descriptive student data, and interviewing administration at the three middle schools. She also stated that nowhere in her dissertation, will [redacted] Public Schools" be identified.

I grant permission to Jennifer Sinal Swingler to carry out this case study research in the [redacted] Public Schools. Attached is the letter from Ms. Sinal Swingler articulating her plans for her dissertation research.

[redacted]
Superintendent of Schools